PRIVATE EYE

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No. 973
Friday
2 April '99

YES, IT'S WINSTONY BLAIR!

"NEVER in the field of human conflict have so many aeroplanes dropped so few bombs on so few targets. We shall not fight them on the beaches, we shall not fight them in the hills, we shall not fight them on the streets. They will never surrender."

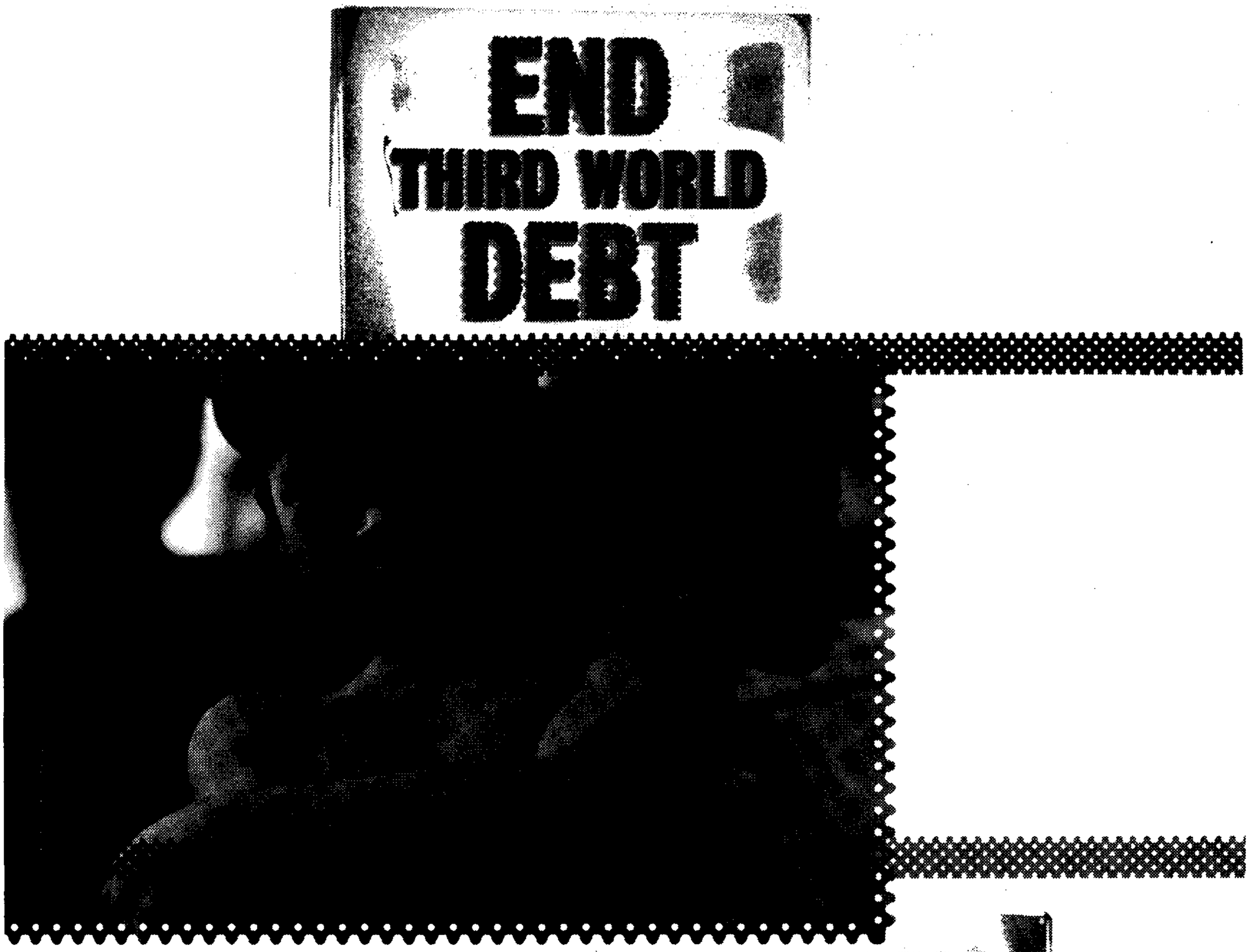
The Express clearly comes at the news agenda differently from its rivals, often exhibiting a compassion or a quirkiness which sets it apart from the crowd.

Roy Greenslade, The Guardian, March 15 1999

Welcome free thinkers.

THE EXPRESS

FULL SPEED AHEAD



AND START TO END THE THIRD WORLD

How can a country pay back debts
to lenders, when they can't even
afford to care for their own people?
Let alone feed and house them.
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And then they demand the interest.

Now you can demand that this debt
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We've a once in a millennium opportunity to make an historic gesture.
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Signature _____ Issue No. _____

PE50

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We believe in life before death

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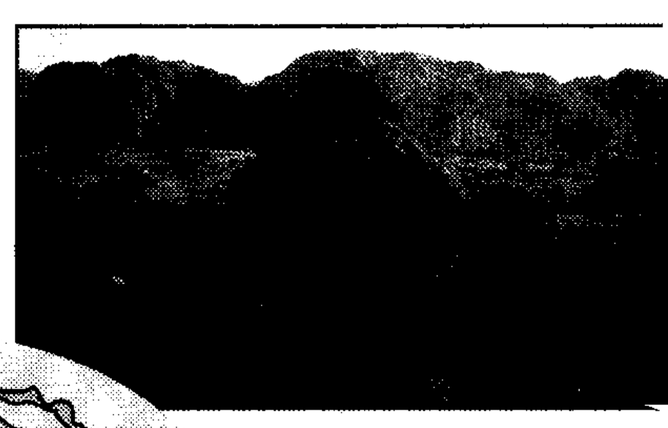
Cycle Cuba©

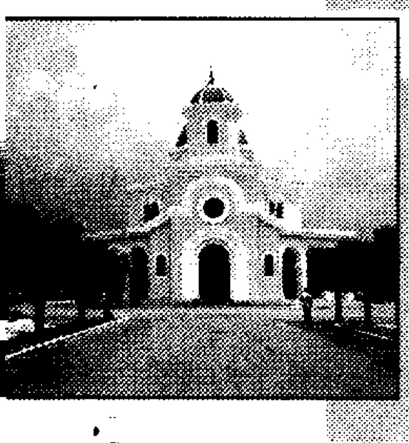
The Charity Challenge in the Caribbean

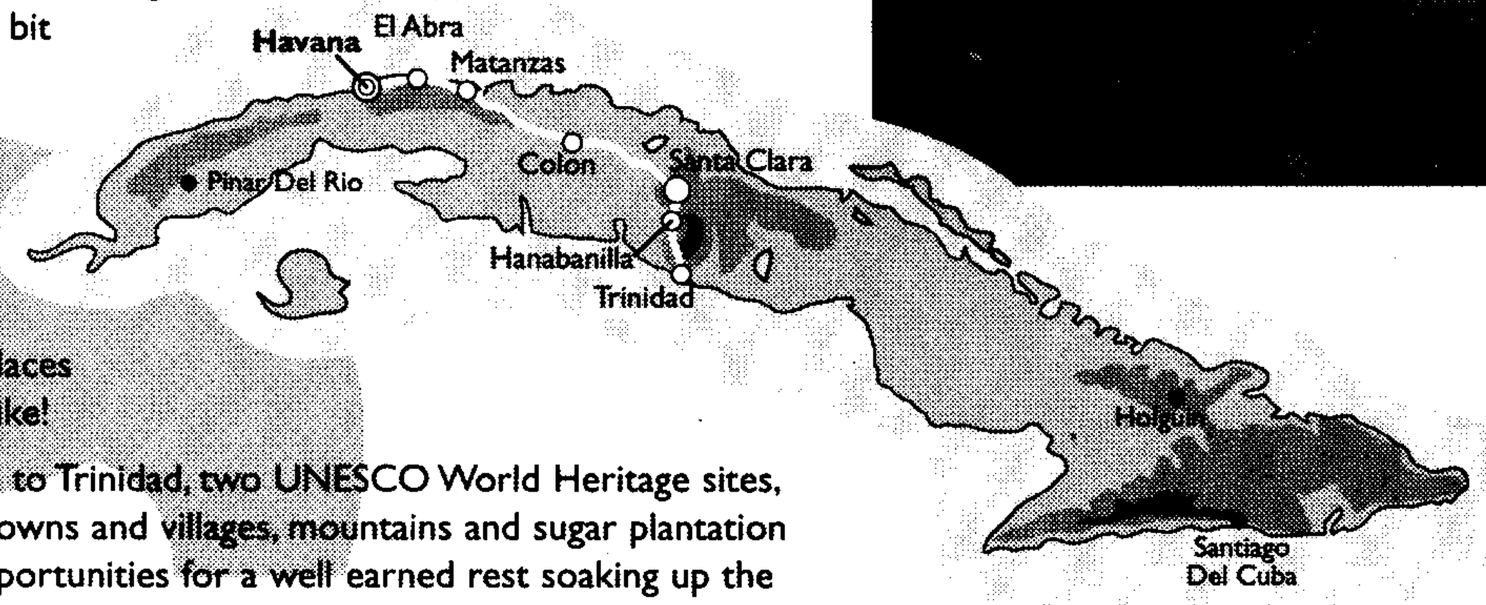
In aid of the National Deaf Children's Society

Cycle 250 miles from Havana to Trinidad in aid of the National Deaf Children's Society. Soak up the sights of the most beautiful Caribbean Island. Enjoy its lush tropical landscapes, soft sandy beaches, fine architecture and warm friendly welcome.



The National Deaf Children's Society is inviting you to take part in something a little bit special our 'Cycle Cuba' Charity Challenge. Cuba, discovered by Columbus in 1492, is a vibrant county with a colourful history, where it's people are renown for their gaiety, music and dance. Experience this most fascinating of places the way most Cubans travel - on a bike!





The route will take you from Havana to Trinidad, two UNESCO World Heritage sites, winding through many small Cuban towns and villages, mountains and sugar plantation country. Some days there will be opportunities for a well earned rest soaking up the sun on the stunning Caribbean beaches.

By taking part in this unique event, you are not only guaranteed the adventure challenge of a lifetime, but will also raise vital funds for the National Deaf Children's Society. The money raised will help us to provide information, technology services and advocacy support to deaf children and their families all over the UK.

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Gnome

WORDS cannot describe my shock and horror on reading in my column in the Gnome on Sunday that I had inadvertently received a £30,000 bribe from the owner of Harrods, Mr Mohamed Al Fugged.

The truth of the matter is that the money was deposited in my hands in a blind envelope via my legal adviser, the late Lord Badman.

Furthermore, Lord Badman said to me at the time, "Here is a huge wad of notes, Norman, that has nothing to do with Mr Fugged. Put it in the bank and don't ask any questions."

Imagine my surprise on learning that this money was, in fact, a "charitable bung" from none other than Mr Fugged who was apparently particularly pleased with a number of decisions concerning him that I had made in my non-political role as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

I am so appalled that I am now returning the money to Mr Fugged with added interest — a gesture that should not under any circumstances be interpreted as a pay-off to make him shut up about what he knows.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
"The Old Bicycle Shop"
Chingford Polecat
Wilts.

"We might as well finish the century as we started it"

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FLAKWATCH

Slobo's Last Chances

4 November 1991: As the Yugoslav army batters Croatia, the European Community issues an ultimatum to Slobodan Milosevic: "Belgrade Gets Final Warning", the *Los Angeles Times* reports.

18 April 1992: According to the *Times*, Serbia has received its "final warnings" from the international community.

11 July 1994: Douglas Hurd and the French foreign minister travel to the Balkans "to deliver a final warning" (*Daily Mail*).

6 December 1994: "There is not much time left," John Major declares, adding that this is "a final warning" to the Serbs.

9 June 1998: "The European Union, appalled at the bloodshed and murder of innocent civilians in Kosovo, delivered a final warning to President Milosevic yesterday and began to prepare the ground for military intervention" (*Glasgow Herald*).

12 June: "NATO last night confronted Slobodan Milosevic with the explicit threat of military force to end Serbia's violent crackdown in Kosovo, on the eve of a final warning from the major powers..." (*The Independent*).

14 June: RAF Jaguars are to put on a massive show of force, the *Mail on Sunday* reveals, "as a final warning to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic".

16 June: The three-hour display of NATO air power is hailed as a great success. "The European Council followed up the exercise with a strong final warning to Mr Milosevic" (*The Scotsman*).

24 June: Trouble-shooting diplomat Richard Holbrooke visits Belgrade, the *Independent* reports, "in what is being seen as a final warning to Serbia to stop the fighting in its troubled Kosovo province before NATO intervenes".

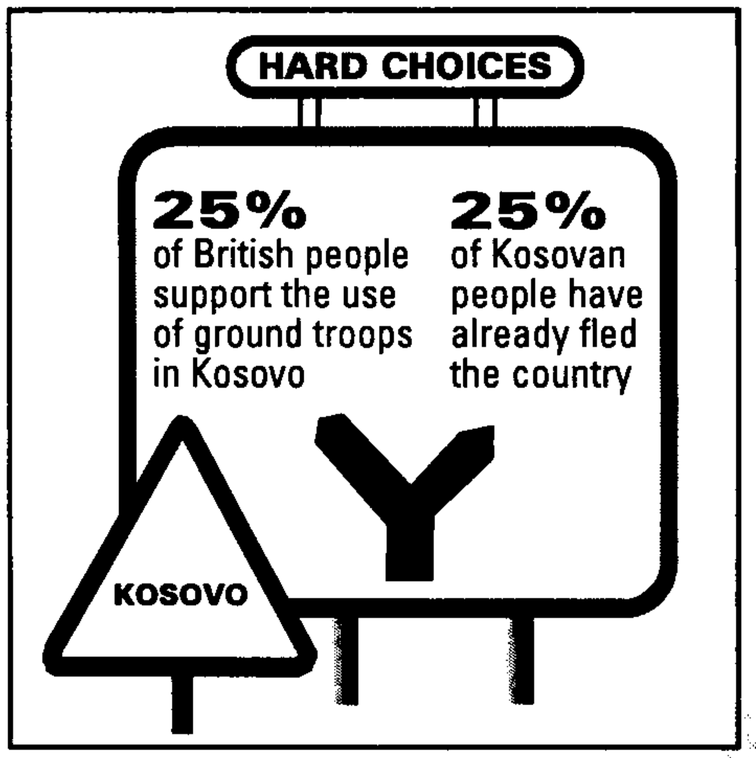
2 October: "Defence secretary George Robertson today delivered a stern final warning to the Serb 'bully boys' in Kosovo — stop killing or face military action..." (*Edinburgh Evening News*).

5 October: "Final Warning to Milosevic" (*Newcastle Journal*).

10 October: "NATO in Final Warning to Milosevic" (*Scotsman*).

11 October: "Another week, another final warning... Richard Holbrooke, the American special envoy, is back in Serbia, delivering the West's latest ultimatum to Slobodan Milosevic over Kosovo" (*Daily Telegraph*).

12 October: "Serbian strongman Slobodan


HARD CHOICES
25%
of British people support the use of ground troops in Kosovo
25%
of Kosovan people have already fled the country
KOSOVO

Milosevic has been a given a deadline of midnight to back down over Kosovo or face air strikes," the *Daily Mail* announces dramatically, adding that B-52s with cruise missiles are flying in to "underline [the] final warning".

20 January 1999: "NATO Delivers Final Warning: War planes on 96 hours' notice to attack Serbia" (*Birmingham Post*).

29 January: "NATO yesterday delivered a stern and final warning to President Slobodan Milosevic that it would use force..." (*Independent*).

19 February: "Milosevic Gets Final Warning" (*Newsday*, New York).

18 March: "NATO Gives Serbs a Final Warning" (*International Herald Tribune*).

22 March: "Serbs Storm On As NATO Gives 'Final Warning' " (*Daily Mail*)

23 March: "Richard Holbrooke, the United States envoy dispatched to Belgrade, yesterday delivered the 'final warning' to Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic" (*Independent*). Note the use of inverted commas around the much-loved catchphrase. Can it be that this warning really is final?

24 March: Not quite. "British government officials said that Mr Milosevic still had one last chance" (*The Times*).

25 March: Bombs away! Tony Blair warns that if Serbia dares to retaliate against the airstrikes, Milosevic can expect a "swift and severe" reaction from NATO. And that's final.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Britain's brave Harrier pilots blitzed the Serbs last night as Nato launched a devastating air bombardment."

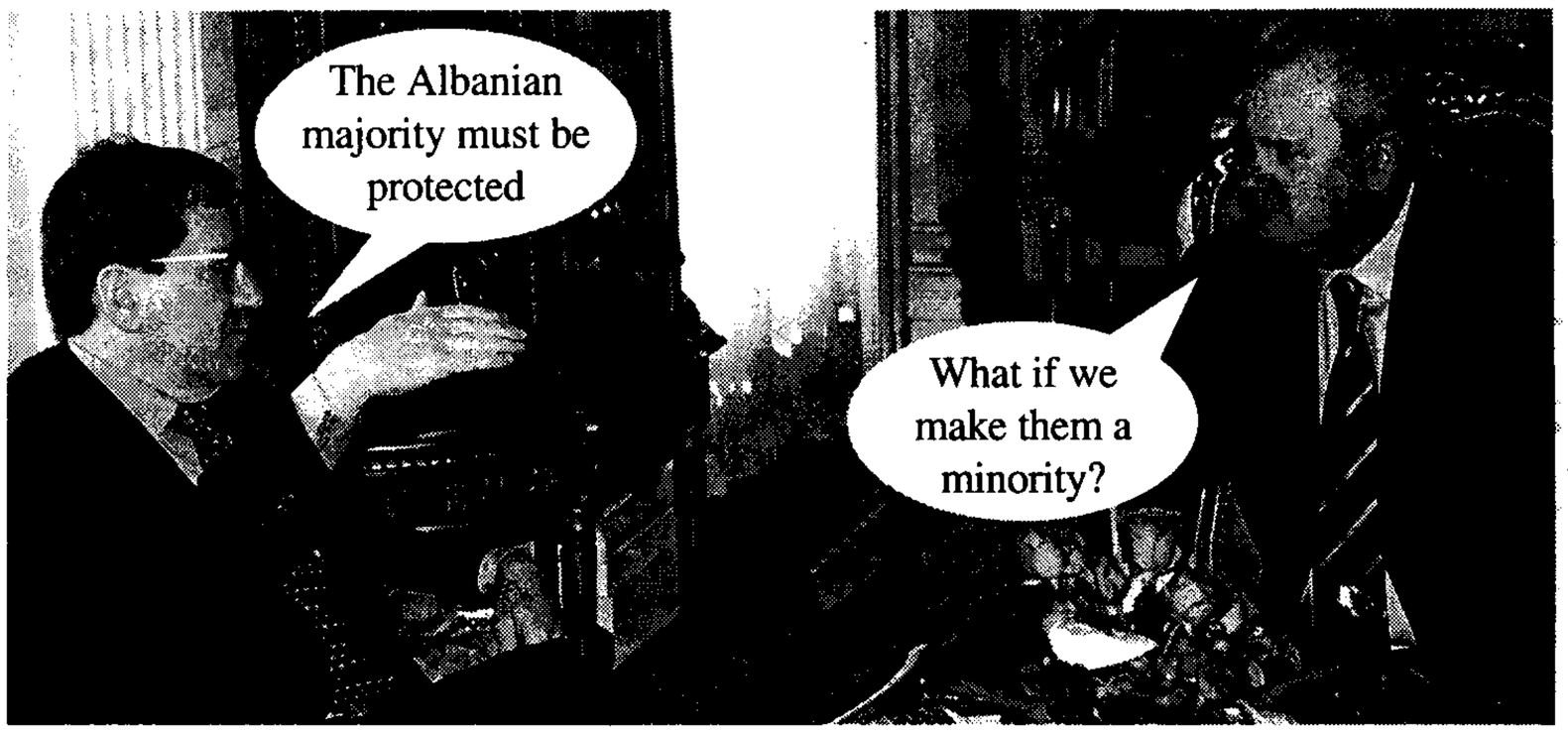
— *Sun*, Thursday 25 March.

"The RAF has successfully dropped only two bombs in the first four days of the air campaign, Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie, chief of the defence staff, said at the ministry of defence briefing yesterday."

— *Daily Telegraph*, Monday 29 March.

NEWS see over

SLOBODAN'S PEACE PLAN



NEWS

VIEWERS of BBC TV news last week were treated to the Balkan opinions of Dame Pauline Neville-Jones. But the BBC scarcely did justice to Dame Pauline's impartial expertise by describing her merely as a former foreign office mandarin who represented Britain at the Bosnian peace talks in 1995.

Though she doesn't care to be reminded of it, Neville-Jones is also a former business partner of the man now known to the tabloids as "Slobba".

As *Eye* readers may recall, one consequence of the Dayton agreement — for which Neville-Jones lobbied energetically — was the lifting of financial sanctions against President Milosevic. Lo and behold, only a few months later she quit Whitehall for a lucrative job as "head of global business strategy" at NatWest Markets.

Over a convivial "working breakfast" with Milosevic and his wife in Belgrade, she then concluded a deal whereby NatWest Markets would privatise Serbia's post and telephone services for a fee of $10m. For another large fee she also agreed to manage the country's national debt. (Alas, the arrangement later fell through following protests from NatWest customers in London, who for some reason objected to their bank doing business with a corrupt and genocidal thug.)

Accompanying Dame Pauline on the jaunt to Belgrade in 1996 was the deputy chairman of NatWest Markets — aka her old foreign office boss Douglas Hurd. Unlike Neville-Jones, he now seems to be maintaining a diplomatic silence as Nato fires cruise missiles at his former client.

● *More HP Sauce 8*

CURIOUSLY the Conservative party, founded on the principle that unhindered competition is always best, is still trying to shield the road haulage industry from outside competition.

It is berating the government for reducing hauliers' subsidy, and the Tory press, which normally takes a dim view of strikes, is oozing with sympathy for the disruptive truckers.

"They must now fight for survival," warned a *Daily Torygraph* editorial without explaining why this is so bad for road haulage when survival of the fittest is considered right for almost all other industries (including coal and steel, which shed thousands of jobs when the Tories cut them adrift in the face of genuinely unfair overseas competition).

It is of course sheer coincidence that the director general of the Road Haulage Association is Steve Norris — a Tory transport minister not so long ago.

● *More Tory road rage 12*

THE official position about the relationship between Mohamed Fayed, owner of Harrods, and Norman Tebbit, the former secretary of state for trade who waved through Fayed's takeover of Harrods, is as follows.

Fayed bought and converted a Range Rover for a disabled person whose identity he didn't know, who later turned out to be Lady Tebbit, Norman's wife. The cost was £30,000.

Neither Lady Tebbit nor Norman knew that Fayed was the donor.

In the *Mail on Sunday* on 21 March, Tebbit agreed he found out the donor was Fayed in March 1998, but said nothing about it. Tebbit also denounced Fayed and said he shouldn't get a British passport.

In the *Mail on Sunday* on 28 March, a furious Fayed denounced Tebbit and demanded the £30,000 back. Tebbit was shocked. "Is it possible I have misjudged this man?" he said and sent off a cheque for £50,000 to Fayed's favourite charity.

● *For the full story see Footnotes, 26*

MANY wondered why Monica Lewinsky, renowned for her poise and self-control, burst into tears while signing books at Harrods.

Some observers put her distress down to a gift she had just received from Mohamed Fayed, the shop's jolly owner: a box of the very best Harrods cigars.

● *More Books etc 25*

Street Of Shame

THE NIGHT WAR BROKE OUT...

WHILE their colleagues were being bombed in Belgrade and beaten up in Pristina last week, the London-based Street of Shame made a selfless gesture of solidarity — by gathering in the grand ballroom of the London Hilton and giving a dazzling display of drunkenness and brawling.

The occasion was the British press awards, organised by the *Press Gazette*, and all went swimmingly as 700 hacks downed champagne and chortled at the amusing impressions of Mr Rory Bremner. But after dinner, master of ceremonies Nicholas Witchell feebly attempted to tell some jokes and was ignored by most of the audience. By 10pm when the awards were actually being presented, the hacks had been drinking for three hours and greeted the results with a storm of boos and catcalls.

Sun editor David Yelland became so hog-whimperingly happy he fell off his chair... and didn't even notice. He was lifted from the floor by his loyal deputy Rebekah Wade.

The announcement that the *Grauniad* had won "newspaper of the year" and "scoop of the year" outraged *Mirror* editor Piers "Moron" Morgan and cronies, who somehow believed they deserved to win the scoop category for having fitted up young William Straw for dealing cannabis. As yet there is no "stupid fugger" category for toadying up to Mohamed Fayed — so poor Piers missed out there too.

To shouts of "Loser! Loser!" from the *Guardian*'s grown-up editor Alan Rusbridger, Moron staggered over to the *Grauniad* table and berated Rusbridger and his pals. *People* editor Neil Wallis then stormed the stage to denounce the whole ceremony as a "broadsheet beanfeast" at the expense of the tabloids — before the plug was pulled on him. Meanwhile Moron sneered at Rusbridger: "We've got more readers in Cornwall than you have in the whole country."

Guardian hack Nick "Filth" Davies riposted: "At least we'll be back next year — by then you'll have been sacked!" Davies was so taken with his witticism he repeated it several times until Moron came back with an even cleverer remark: "You say that again and I'll 'do' your chin!" Public schoolboys, eh?

Bloodshed was not averted elsewhere, however. As the proceedings drew to a close pugnacious *Mirror* reporter Don Mackay became involved in an animated discussion with former colleague Geoff Sutton, who now works for Microsoft. *Mirror* backbencher Lloyd Emburley attempted to restrain the duo and got a bloody nose for his trouble. Emburley insisted that Hilton security call Inspector Knacker, but by the time the boys in blue arrived he could apparently no longer remember who had hit him.

The roistering *Grauniad* party had by now booked itself into a hotel room where the festivities continued and were gatecrashed by the boorish Moron. But not for long. The noise reached such a pitch the hacks were ordered out by the hotel management.

Meanwhile Don Mackay was consoling himself with the fact that the *Mirror had* won something after all — the team reporting award, for coverage of the Omagh bombing. But it had been a long night. Mackay was tired. He felt the splendid cut glass trophy slipping through his fingers... and saw it smash into a thousand pieces on the floor, like the broken dreams of his colleagues...

PS: The *Press Gazette*, having asked BT to sponsor the awards *next year*, had invited BT's head of external communications Ted Graham to witness the bash. Sensible man, he walked out early, raising fears that he was appalled by the hack's behaviour. A BT flunkey claimed Mr Graham had merely been heeding his body clock: "Ted's slippers turned to glass at about midnight, his middle name being moderation in all things." Funnily enough though BT will *not* be a major sponsor next year (though it will think about backing the less contentious prize for sober young journalists.)

BIBULOUS *Evening Standard* hack Gervase "Barmy" Webb was on top form last Friday while attending a friend's birthday dinner in the private room at London's Cobden Club. After giving a spirited rendition of *Deutschland Uber Alles* he rounded off the performance with a spectacular display of projectile vomiting all over the tablecloth and several neighbours.

On being asked to leave, Webb stumbled through a door which he took to be the exit — only to find himself in the kitchen. Fearful there might soon be an unwanted chopped-carrot garnish all over the dishes *du jour*, a chef hastily escorted Webb to the gents' lavatories for a lengthy session of rest and recuperation.

Still, at least he managed to keep his clothes on this time. After an epic festivity two years ago, "Barmy" he was found the next morning unconscious on the balcony of another *Standard* hack, naked but for his Calvin Klein underpants, and attached to an equally tired, emotional and underclothed blonde hackette by a pair of pink, fluffy handcuffs.

Ivor Hesmondhalgh, a director of the Cobden Club, tells the *Eye* that Webb will still be welcome there in spite of last Friday's eruption. "We all love Gervase," he says, "though I'd rather he didn't throw up over my wife and sister-in-law. But we'll give him another chance. I'd be more upset if he'd done it over my Armani suit."

"We're going over the top!"

WHILE the B-52s were bombing Serbia last week, where was the *Daily Telegraph*'s defence correspondent Tim Butcher? Er, on holiday in Namibia.

When efforts to trace the absent hack failed, *Torygraph* executives turned in desperation to military specialist Peter Almond... who had been sacked as defence correspondent only a few weeks earlier to make way for Butcher. Please come back to Canary Wharf, they begged, and we'll pay you whatever you want. No hard feelings, eh?

As it turned out Almond had hard feelings galore and replied that nothing on earth would induce him to return to the *Daily Telegraph*. Besides, he had just been signed up for a huge fee to provide expert commentary on the war for the *Daily Mail*.

Thus the countless armchair brigadiers who read the *Telegraph* had to follow the Balkan blitz without any assistance from the paper's chief defence reporter. As the increasingly frantic telegrams to Namibia went unanswered, conspiracy theorists at the paper began to wonder if they were being intercepted en route, since Namibia was one of the few governments to oppose UN resolutions against Slobodan Milosevic.

Butcher was eventually located in a holiday hotel and ordered back to Blighty. He returned to work on Monday — a mere five days after the start of the first European war since 1945.

TEENAGE runaway Emily Carrigan's relief after her happy reunion with her father gave rise to a game of fill in the blanks for some newspapers.

In the *Daily Mail* she was quoted on 17 March as saying: "I was shown a article in the *Mail* and my dad had said I was the most loved girl in the world."

Young Ms Carrigan evidently had plenty of time to read the newspapers while roaming the lonely streets of the capital. According to the *Sun*, also on 17 March, she gave them the following vote of thanks on her homecoming: "I am so glad I saw the *Sun* article. It was the first time I really knew people were worried and looking for me."

100 YEARS AGO

THE weekend before the law lords' verdict on General Pinochet, two Sunday newspapers suddenly exhumed the tale of Jack Straw's visit to Chile in 1966.

"Thirty-three years on, it could challenge the foundations of the home secretary's authority," the *Sunday Times* warned. The *Mail on Sunday* devoted two pages to this "fascinating story of one young man's early foray into the world of radical politics... If he has kept the passion for left-wing ideals and admiration for Marxist Allende, it is inconceivable he would not endorse Pinochet's extradition."

The newspapers concluded that Straw's journey to Chile proved that he must have been a "hard-left" socialist. In fact it proves just the opposite. The trip was financed by the Fund for International Student Cooperation (FISC), one of many groups set up by western governments during the Cold War to keep impressionable youngsters from succumbing to the lure of Marxism.

The three trustees of FISC were Sir Berkeley Everard Foley Gage, Old Etonian and former British ambassador to Peru; Gerald Woods, a banker; and John Butterworth, the rightwing vice-chancellor of Warwick University. Scarcely an obvious nest of subversives.

As long ago as March 1967 the *Eye* revealed that FISC specialised in organising lavish weekends at country house hotels "to which prominent students, particularly those wavering between factions in the National Union of Students, were invited and treated to worthy lectures on student movements in Latin America and that sort of thing. It was all very gentle and pleasant and of course, very occasionally, the guests were reminded of the red peril" (*Eye* 138). We also noted, a few years later, that outfits such as FISC "have long been used as a cover for British intelligence-gathering" (*Eye* 375).

The real question, then, is not whether young Straw was a Marxist but whether he might have been, however unwittingly, a useful asset to the chaps from the foreign office. There is one person who might shed some light on this. The manager of FISC who organised Straw's Chilean jaunt in 1966 was Meta Ramsay, a former president of the Scottish Union of Students. A couple of years later she joined MI6, where she worked for the next 22 years, mostly running Cold War operations in Scandinavia.

Where is this veteran spook now? Three years ago she accepted a "new" Labour peerage and since the 1997 general election Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale has been a government whip — serving in the same administration as... Jack Straw.

THE *Sunday Times*'s fearless commitment to exposing secrets suddenly evaporates when its own affairs come under scrutiny, to judge by the bizarre antics of its in-house solicitor Alastair "Blubber" Brett.

Two weeks ago the lachrymose lawyer heard a rumour that Mark Watts, a hack on *Sunday Business*, had somehow acquired a bundle of internal memos from Brett to fellow executives at Wapping concerning some ancient litigation brought against the *Sunday Times* by Asil Nadir. He immediately rang Watts and demanded to know if this were true. Understandably enough, the hack refused to say.

Trembling with rage Brett then fired off an hysterical fax to *Sunday Business*'s editor Jeff Randall: "I feel I must write to you as an old friend and as the editor to say that I do not expect confidential communications between me as company solicitor and third parties to be in your possession and even less for them to form part of an article." As evidence of his seriousness, Brett added that he was cancelling a long-standing engagement to meet Randall for "a convivial day's golf" the following week.

The documents, he continued, "clearly should be returned and should remain confidential if they contain confidential information. I am therefore writing this as an open letter putting you and *Sunday Business* on notice that if there is any kind of breach of confidence then we will have no alternative but to take action and seek not only the recovery of the documents but also exemplary damages if and insofar as damage is caused by a flagrant breach of confidence."

Phew! Quite why Brett is in such a panic remains a mystery, especially as the Asil Nadir lawsuit seems most unlikely to proceed while the plaintiff is holed up in Northern Cyprus. Still, it is useful to learn of Brett's passionate belief that newspapers must not obtain or publish "confidential information". Could this explain why there are never any good stories in the *Sunday Times* these days?

A LAST-MINUTE reprieve means that *Sunday People* columnist Dr Vernon Coleman will continue to churn out his weekly melange of sex and militant vegetarianism ad infinitum.

As the *Eye* revealed recently, editor Neil Wallis secretly sacked Coleman a year ago only to find that the canny former GP was protected by a rare, rolling one-year contract. Wallis had tried to persuade Coleman that halving his £150,000 annual fee was a small price to pay for the honour of remaining at the *People* — a suggestion that the millionaire medic received with great mirth.

But as the date of Coleman's departure loomed, at the end of March, the desperate editor came down from his perch at Canary Wharf and proposed a new contract. Hacks at the ailing rag are consumed with curiosity as to just how much dosh the Doc has stashed into his little black bag this time.

ON 22 November the *Sunday Times* published a massive piece on the front page of its news review entitled FLY THE BELOVED COUNTRY.

The piece, backed up by a news story, was by Anne Paton, widow of Alan Paton, whose book *Cry the Beloved Country* is a classic in anti-apartheid South African literature. Mrs Paton said she was leaving South Africa because of all the violence and indicated that things were worse there than in the old days.

The article was reproduced in the South African *Sunday Independent*. Stung by the publicity for the article, Alan Paton's son David and granddaughter Carol wrote to the *Sunday Times* in London and the *Sunday Independent* in South Africa making a number of pertinent points:

1 Anne Paton is English. She is not flying the beloved country, but returning home to the beloved country.

2 She is Alan Paton's second wife. She is not the mother of his children. His first wife Dorrie and his children do not agree with Anne on political matters.

3 "We never felt that she (Anne) had true empathy with all the peoples of South Africa, but rather with a social set of whites who were property owners..."

4 "In many ways we see a bright future for South Africa..."

Altogether an interestingly different point of view, with some important facts. The *Sunday Independent* in South Africa printed it. The *Sunday Times* in Britain didn't.

IT IS a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman in her late thirties and on the lookout for a husband, should not write up her failed dates for a national newspaper, let alone publish them as a novel.

Consequently when freelance journalist Isabel Wolff, aka Tiffany Trott, turned her quest for Mr Right into fodder for a *Daily Telegraph* column and book, *The Trials of Tiffany Trott*, she incurred the wrath of at least one prospective partner.

The self-declared introduction agency aficionado, on seeing his amorous pursuits in print, complained to the *Eye*: "I wonder at what point this toe rag intends to repay the efforts of those who were unwittingly used for her own research."

Perhaps he would have a little more sympathy for Ms Wolff, whose new novel ("a romantic comedy about a woman who is a bit of a victim") comes out this summer, if he knew that she too still suffers from a lonely heart.

Wolff's publisher at HarperCollins, Rachel Hore, maintains that Tiffany Trott was not a cynical exercise: "This was a true roman à clef. If Isabel had met Mr Right during her research, she would have married him."

STUDENT UPDATE

ARE the following events by any chance related?

Sunday 15 November 1998. The 20th *Guardian*/NUS Student Media Awards end in farce as over 100 student delegates are stranded in the rain outside the overstuffed Truman Buildings venue chosen by the *Grauniad*. One student is assaulted in nearby Brick Lane and threatens to sue someone. The *Graun* and the NUS quickly blame each other for the debacle.

Tuesday 23 February 1999. The *Guardian* launches its 21st Student Media Awards without NUS involvement.

Tuesday March 2. An article in the *Grauniad* education section makes much of a series of disaffiliation votes among NUS member institutions. In tones stinking of *Schadenfreude* the disintegration of the NUS is predicted.

Thursday March 11. The *Independent* launches its "National Student Journalism Awards" in conjunction with, er, the NUS. Such luminaries as *Indescribablyboring* editor Simon Kelner, ex-NUS President David Aaronovitch and current NUS president Andrew Pakes are announced as the judges.

Tuesday March 16. The cover story of the *Guardian*'s G2 section is devoted to the subject of students "poised to make a hard left turn in today's NUS elections". The article tips one Kate Buckell, figurehead of the "Alliance for Workers' Liberty", as "hotly favoured to win" against the Blairite incumbent Andrew Pakes. After all, the paper argues, last year Buckell came within 15 votes of winning. Meanwhile, hundreds of free copies of the *Independent* are given away at the conference by NUS staff. Later that day Andrew Pakes is swept to victory and a second term with a majority of 121 (an eightfold increase), Kate Buckell argues with the Socialist Workers about who betrayed whom, and the dear old *Grauniad* is left with egg on its face.

Tuesday March 23. The main cover article of the *Guardian*'s higher education section indulges in yet more doomsaying — this time stoking the flames of discontent with NUS among FE colleges. Inside, space is found for a student writer to describe Pakes' reelection as a victory for "evil", while Pakes himself is denounced as a "vile" opportunist. Largely true this, but by now the paper has abandoned even the pretence of balance when it comes to NUS.

LEGAL NEWS

WHY did the criminal cases review commission take so long to refer the Hanratty case to the court of appeal?

In October 1997 the commissioner dealing with the case, former Hertfordshire chief constable Bill (Baden) Skitt, told Michael Hanratty, the hanged man's brother, that the police and prosecution case was riddled with holes; and that most of the holes had been plugged by the time-honoured device of not disclosing vital information.

The delay came when DNA tests appeared to show a match between swabs taken from Michael Hanratty and tiny spots of semen on a fragment of the underwear of Valerie Storie, who was sexually assaulted in the murder car before being shot and paralysed for life.

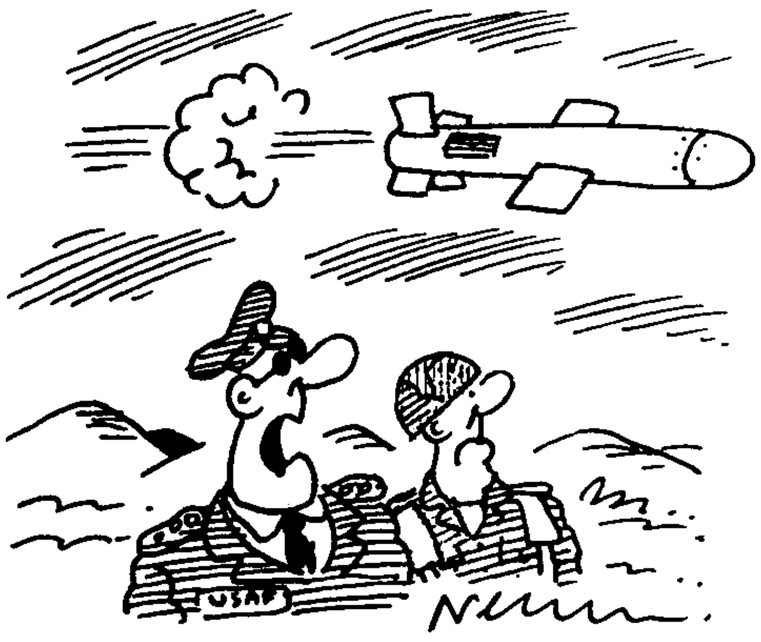
This match was promptly leaked to the *Daily Mail*, which rejoiced under the triumphant headline HANRATTY: WAS HE GUILTY AFTER ALL? The commission experts then spent many months trying to find out the history of the fragment of underwear. The search was inconclusive. There was no DNA at the time of the murder (1961) so no one bothered to store or record the storage of the samples.

There is some evidence that all samples relevant to Hanratty were stored in the same laboratory, even the same container. These included bits of Hanratty's trousers which also had semen on them. The commission concluded that they could not rule out the possibility that the fragment had been muddled and contaminated and that the DNA reading — already unconvincing — was likely to prove unreliable.

"NEW" LABOUR, in its guise as the new war party, has become tetchy over the BBC's mission to explain — especially when our brave boys have been in the skies over Belgrade and Baghdad.

Desperately cribbing from Norman Tebbit's hymn sheet on how to intimidate BBC correspondents who dare report in an even handed fashion, Alastair Campbell has locked on to the talents of toadying backbencher Ben Bradshaw, the former BBC journalist turned airhead MP for Exeter.

Even Bradshaw was surprised at his last minute selection in the city, but he has now taken to denouncing the BBC loudly for "biased reporting" over Iraq and Kosovo. This would not matter if Bradshaw at least knew what he himself was talking about. But over the weekend he claimed on air that in the second world war the Serbs fought *alongside* the Germans. Shome mishtake, shurely?



"It's a peace-seeking missile"

WILLIAM HAGUE's attack on Labour "cronyism" couldn't have been better timed — coming as it did shortly before the selection of a Tory candidate to fight Tatton at the next election.

With Martin Bell standing down, Tatton will once again be a safe Conservative seat and many experienced ex-MPs were after the nomination. But the lucky winner was one George Osborne, a 26-year-old wallpaper heir. Who he? Er... a crony of William Hague.

Meanwhile Tory researchers are anxiously checking the political views of gorgeous pouting Amanda Platell, Hague's new spin doctor. At a debate organised by the Media Society only a few weeks ago she delivered a passionately pro-European speech, ridiculing the insularity and xenophobia of right-wing Eurosceptics. More alarmingly still, it transpires that the speech was largely ghost-written for her by Spartist hack Francis Wheen, not hitherto known as a loyal supporter of the Conservative party.

THERE was much feigned shock in Labour circles after Inspector Knacker's investigations revealed that Newark Blair babe Fiona Jones had not been economical with her election expenses. The court agreed and the hapless Jones was stripped of her Westminster seat.

"New" Labour will not support her appeal, but what many in the party really want to know is why she was backed to the hilt for so long. Within weeks of her surprise win in Nottinghamshire, local members complained to party headquarters of particularly fishy election expense smells. Prominent member and former candidate hopeful Gill Dawn was particularly indignant at how the local campaign was run. For her sins Dawn was the subject of a party investigation while serious allegations over Jones were ignored.

The ambitious Jones even managed to elbow herself to the front of a photo call of Blair babes pictured gazing soppily at the Dear Leader. And as Inspector Knacker launched his own inquiry, regional Labour officials closed ranks behind her.

Now Jones has been found guilty, Dawn has left the party in disgust at what she believes has been an organised vendetta against her for speaking out, and Labour's NEC has decided to shut down the Newark party. Should Knacker feel underemployed, he might yet ask certain regional officials how many party agents in no-hope seats were asked by them to risk imprisonment and consider falsifying election expenses so that unspent money could be diverted to "target seats".

HAVING moved heaven and earth to shoo in the plodding Alun Michael to do Tony's bidding in Wales, trashing the popular choice Rhodri Morgan, "new" Labour faces an uncomfortable fact. The complicated election system for the Welsh assembly means Michael will be lucky to win a seat on it, let alone become its leader.

Michael's passionate and longstanding support for devolution had, er, led him to not even seek an assembly seat. And since he had not been selected by any constituency, his name was miraculously added to the top-up list of seats to be awarded to each party in proportion to votes received.

Fearing that a good result for Plaid Cymru might rob them of the statesman-like Michael, party bigwigs hatched a new plan to elect a new leader whose name was not Ron Davies. So, in the event of a particularly sad day at black rock before election night, the crestfallen Alun Michael will be reinstated during the next reshuffle, while Mo Mowlam's assiduous assistant Paul Murphy may be shifted to the Welsh office at Gwidyr House. Which leaves a vacancy for leader of the Welsh assembly.

Since newly elected assembly members could prove a relatively easy touch for the kind persuasiveness of the charming Ron Davies, it has been decided that the Blairite Welsh Labour executive should assist assembly members make their historic choice. Step forward the first leader of the Welsh assembly, Mr Rhodri Morgan.

THE lord chancellor's department is not a happy ship.

It confirms to the *Eye* that John Disley, regional immigration adjudicator for London, was suspended on 26 February following a complaint from a female staff member that he assaulted her.

Castleford market trader Ann Price, who works on the Eve Lingerie stall in the indoor market hall, said her cups ran over on the first free parking day.

Pontefract & Castleford Express

LORD chancellor Lord Irvine and his department were saved by the outbreak of war from too much unpleasant publicity following their defeat and humiliation in the courts last week.

A London tribunal decided unanimously that the way Irvine's crony, city solicitor Gary Hart, was appointed "special adviser" was discriminatory on grounds of race and gender.

The judgment does not just affect the pompous Irvine and his purged press department (which spent weeks telling newspapers and TV that the case was being brought by "mischievous" feminists and was "baseless"). It affects the entire government and its growing and expensive band of specialist advisers, almost all of whom were appointed like Hart: from a band of white men whose only verifiable qualification is that they are the ministers' cronies.

Irvine will appeal, at our expense, to the employment appeals tribunal; but if, as seems likely, the appeal fails and Hart is sent back to Herbert Smith, a host of further tribunals may follow which could send most of the current 69 advisers scurrying out of Whitehall. An even worse possibility is that the whole system adopted by "new" Labour ministers to bring their mates into government may be threatened.

The legal base for special advisers was laid down during Harold Wilson's 1964-68 government, which passed an "order in council" legitimising the appointment by ministers of advisers from outside the civil service. The appointees, however, were firmly restricted to "advice to ministers". Government papers disclosed to the recent tribunal make it clear today's advisers have a far wider brief.

They are expected to brief MPs, handle ministers' publicity, deal with (and entertain) journalists and present government policy to the public. Witness Sonia Phippard from the cabinet office agreed that these duties went beyond the advisers' activities prescribed by law. Moreover there was proof the government knew their advisers were trespassing on illegal territory.

On 7 May 1997, a week after the general election, the government passed a new order in council legitimising all the above extra activities for three new advisers for the prime minister. Therefore, though it may now be legal for Alastair Campbell and Jonathan Powell to brief journalists and MPs, etc, the new order emphasises the illegal activities of all the other advisers who cost us £2.8m last year.

All this was made worse at the tribunal by a letter from Geoffrey Hoon, Irvine's minister of state, who wrote to Tory frontbencher Iain Duncan-Smith with the novel view that the government's appointment of advisers was above the law. The letter somehow it fell into the hands of the complainants, whose lawyer Jane Deighton made the telling point that the last person in the world who should claim, let alone believe, that government appointments were above the law is surely... the minister of state in the lord chancellor's department.

TORY newspaper proprietor and shadow home secretary Sir Norman Fowler may soon have to stop boasting of his membership of the National Union of Journalists (*Eye* 971).

Hacks who thought it a bit rich — coming from the chairman of Regional Independent media, which is busy sacking union activists — voted at last week's annual NUJ conference to launch disciplinary proceedings against Fowler.

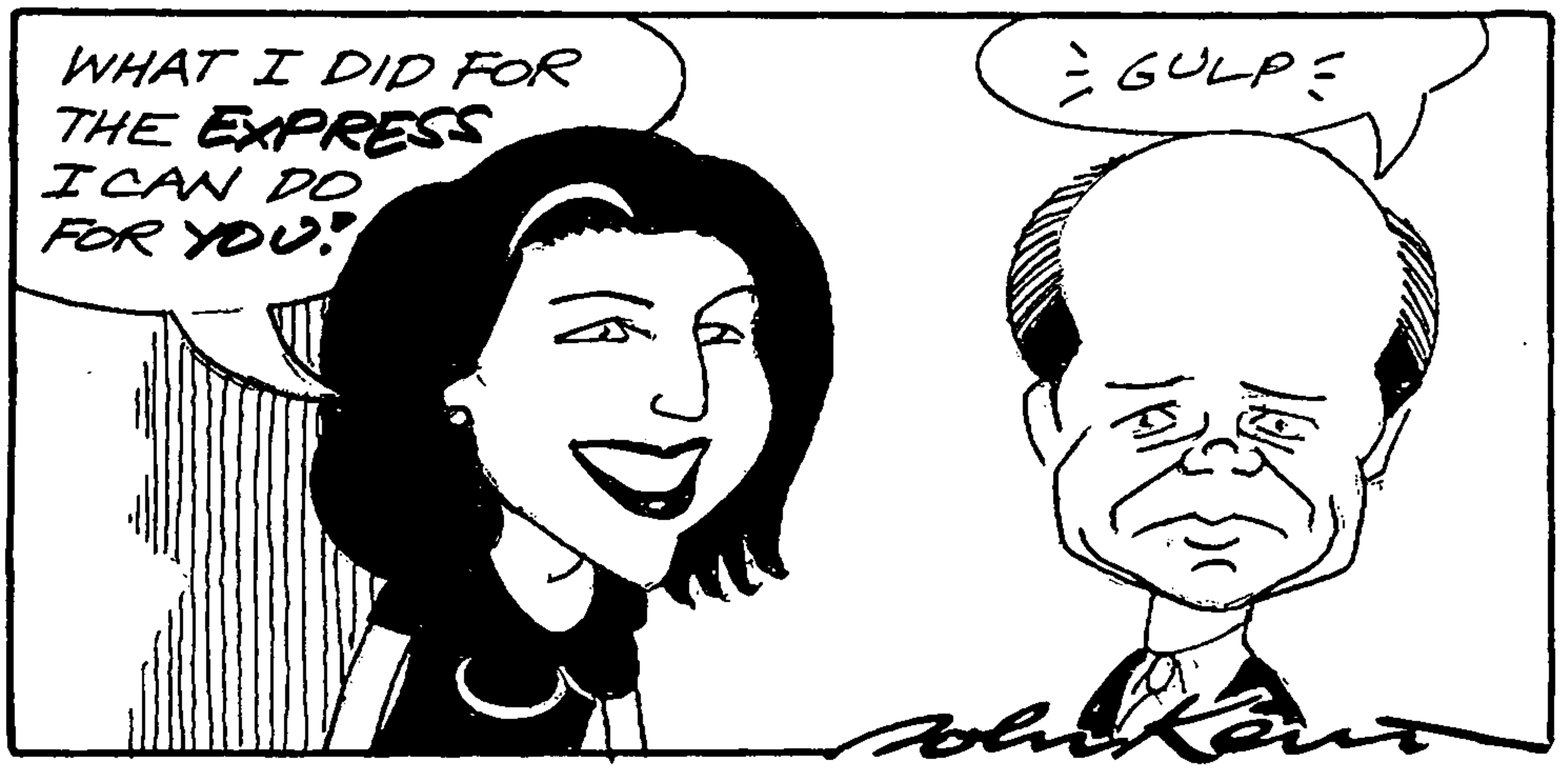
If his staff are denied union rights, they ask, why should he enjoy them?

AFTER the implosion of the European commission, Tony Benn drew up a crafty early-day motion demanding that all future European commissioners appointed by the British government be elected.

He did so knowing this would be the last thing that the would-be president of Europe Tony Blair would sign up to. Imagine the Bennatollah's surprise when another old has-been approached him in the tearoom, saying: "Tony, that is a very good idea. Would you mind if I signed as well?"

Step forward... John Major, for it was he.

'Backbiter'



IN THE TEAROOM

DURING the general election campaign one of "new" Labour's key concepts was something called "the politics of insecurity". It was dreamed up by Cannock MP Tony Wright, a former politics don who was then Tony Blair's pet ideologue.

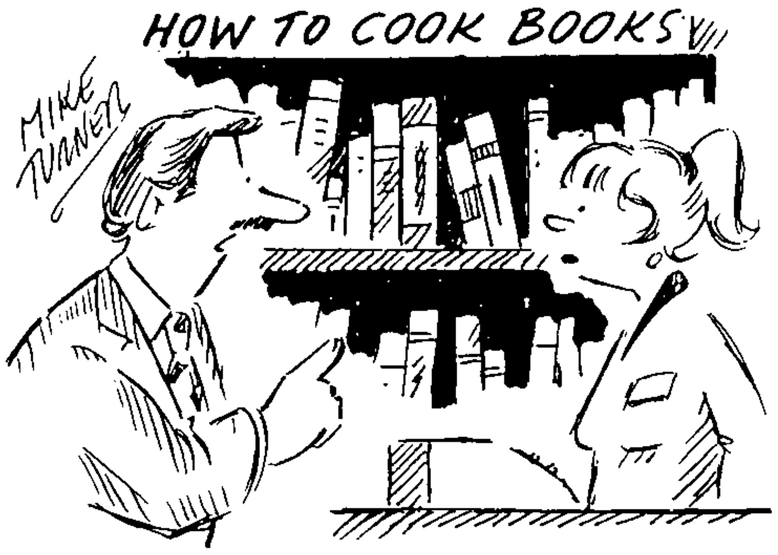
In a nutshell it promised that a Labour government would halt the new managerialist terror where sweaty, lascivious bosses could with impunity shove gorgeous, pouting Miss Prim up against the photocopier and say "fuck me or you're fired".

Not surprisingly the idea of "fairness at work" caught on, not just with Blair's babes but with wage-slaves across middle Britain who were fed up with cruel and arbitrary managers. But somewhere both Tony Wright (once tipped for high cabinet office) and his visionary policy fell off the bandwagon. For a while Margaret Beckett and the plucky Ian Macartney struggled to keep the principle alive, but now the fear and stress levels of millions of ordinary employees are in the hands of two ruthless, cold-eyed, hyper-ambitious placemen — the weaselly trade and industry secretary Stephen Byers and Lord "Chris" Haskins, the chairman of Northern Foods and head of the cabinet office's "better regulation unit".

A proposal now on the table suggests removing unfair dismissal rights from the five million employees of small businesses, tightening the rules to make it harder to go to an industrial tribunal and reducing to £10,000 the compensation for anyone who does fight their way through the process.

On paper Britain has an impressive list of employment rights: statutory maternity leave, protection from unfair dismissal, caps on working time... and so on. But big business learned how to get round these ages ago. Any large organisation puts people on short-run contracts which never quite "connect", so no one is officially continuously employed for the necessary qualifying period. Now small firms look to be exempted, hardly anyone will actually benefit from these liberal-seeming laws except... er... the civil servants who drafted them. Astonishingly the backbench clones in the tearoom have noticed and some are actually plotting open revolt. But then, we are a nation at war and big talk is cheap.

'Urquhart'



"Do you have the one by Gordon Brown?"

CORRECTION OF THE WEEK

Patti Boulaye: An Apology

In an article headed Black And Blue yesterday, we interviewed Patti Boulaye about her intention to stand for the Greater London Assembly, as a Conservative... We quoted Ms Boulaye, a prominent black actress and singer, as saying: "This is a time to support apartheid... I mean people say, 'why didn't you support it when it was in government?' Because it would have been the fashionable thing to do. This is a time to support aparthied because it's unfashionable." What Ms Boulaye actually said was "a party", meaning the Conservative Party... The Guardian apologises profusely to Ms Boulaye for suggesting she made remarks which seemed to show she supported something totally abhorrent to her.

The Grauniad

The 300 year old Dew Drop Inn with its friendly log fires and raging staff is a perfect place to while away an evening.

Advertisement

NOOKS and CORNERS

THOMAS HARDY's heart is buried in Stinsford churchyard near Dorchester in Dorset (the rest of him being incinerated and placed in Westminster Abbey). When Hardy knew the village, it was described as "a romantic and pretty cluster of buildings... embosomed amidst the clump of trees than can be seen from the turnpike road".

One of those buildings is Stinsford House, once a charming and ancient building of stone and brick with a complicated history. Pevsner was puzzled by it: "One would like to know more about this," he wrote in his *Buildings of England* volume.

Well, now we do. Last year it was surveyed by the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments in England, which concluded that the house is medieval origin with much surviving medieval fabric from the original courtyard house. The inspector noted a blocked two-light 15th century window. Nice to know that, because you cannot see it now: it has been demolished.

Much more, in fact, has recently been exposed — medieval roof timbers, more ancient windows, a 16th century fireplace, 17th century window shutters, ancient vaulting — and all dumped in skips, unrecorded. For, surprisingly perhaps, Stinsford House is being ripped apart. Those trees that protected its seclusion have mostly been cut down to make way for a bijou development of executive homes in the Prince of Wales-approved Poundbury style.

These new houses are an "enabling development" in the grounds permitted by West Dorset district council ostensibly to ensure the preservation of Stinsford House. And work began last year to convert the wretched old thing into flats. With exemplary sensitivity, Messrs P.A. Burridge & Sons have replaced old timber and stone floors with lovely new reinforced concrete floors, and repaired and plastered old walls with hard cement render, to make the place comfortable. All internal panelling, door architraves and other joinery has been stripped out. And timber windows with Gothic tracery and coping on the early 19th century elevation have all been removed.

How can this have happened when Stinsford House is a listed building and West Dorset borough council actually employs a "listed buildings officer", one David Chiplen? After all, to bugger up a listed building requires listed building consent. And it has now emerged that no such consent exists because no proper plan has been approved.

Yes, consent was given in 1997 to divide the building into 10 dwellings, but that did not deal with the details. Revised plans were promised the following year... but they have never been submitted or approved. Oh dear: a small administrative oversight —like not consulting the statutorily recognised amenity societies such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings as the legislation requires.

Yet Mr Chiplen, the officer charged with protecting the county's many listed buildings, merely sheds crocodile tears, says he had no idea that any important medieval remains were in the building, and claims that nothing can be done to stop an owner butchering his own property. And English Heritage's south west region has simply washed its hands of the affair, claiming that all the internal fittings and chimneypieces were removed by vandals before the current work began and that "there was little more the local planning authority could have done to stop it from deteriorating".

Really? As a matter of fact Stinsford House has been owned by Norman Hayward since 1993. And, in January 1997 — before any so-called permissions had been granted — Mr Chilpen wrote to those acting for Hayward's partners, P.A. Burridge & Sons, to point out that no detailed drawings had been submitted to show what was proposed and that before listed building consent could be given, many details must be agreed.

This included panelling, doors and cornices matching the existing ones and that "wherever possible existing should be retained in position or re-used;" ditto with windows and shutters; "existing fireplaces must be retained" along with all timber floors, while "all existing flagstones floors (including tiled floors) are to be retained in place"; and "in repairs to and repointing of stonework and brickwork use appropriate lime putty mortars".

So we must assume that all these features were still in place *then*. And, after all, "this is a fine historic house with a very important history and association with Stinsford Church and of course Thomas Hardy. The objective is to repair and restore this house in a sympathetic way..."

Some hope. And if an historic building like Stinsford House can be wrecked with impunity, what hope for other listed buildings in West Dorset? Indeed, there is the case of Downe Hall at Bridport where another disastrous "enabling development" has been permitted — and vigorously opposed by the Georgian Group — using Stinsford as a precedent. What is clear is that as far as West Dorset district council is concerned, historic building legislation is simply a nuisance and listed buildings are merely assets to be stripped to enable the land to be covered with yet more nice homes. And if the visitor to the county seeks something beautiful and historic? Well, they can always go and see Poundbury.

'Piloti'

COMPUTER UPDATE

FIRST Britain... then the world. This must be secret corporate motto of the Eye's favourite computer company EDS (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*). Not content with ballsing up UK government IT systems, the Texan firm has set its sights on Australia.

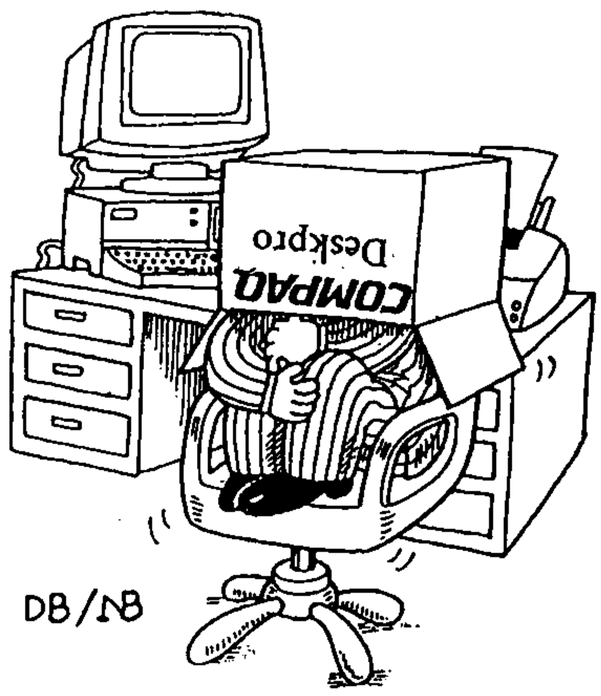
The tax self-assessment computer programme run here by EDS for the Inland Revenue was a sorry tale of backlog and waste, while the Child Support Agency had to s-crap its useless EDS system. The London Borough of Bent fined the company £9,000 for failing to meet targets to collect council tax, and EDS was sacked by Wandsworth from a £3.2m housing benefit contract.

In Canada, EDS lost a contract to automate the income-security system because it missed a 1998 deadline and risked overspending by millions.

Nevertheless the Australian tax office (ATO) has turned a blind eye to the catalogue of error and delay and has agreed to pay the firm US$350m to "outsource" its IT activities and save the ATO $A1bn over the five years. Well, that's the plan, anyway...

NEW OLD SAYINGS

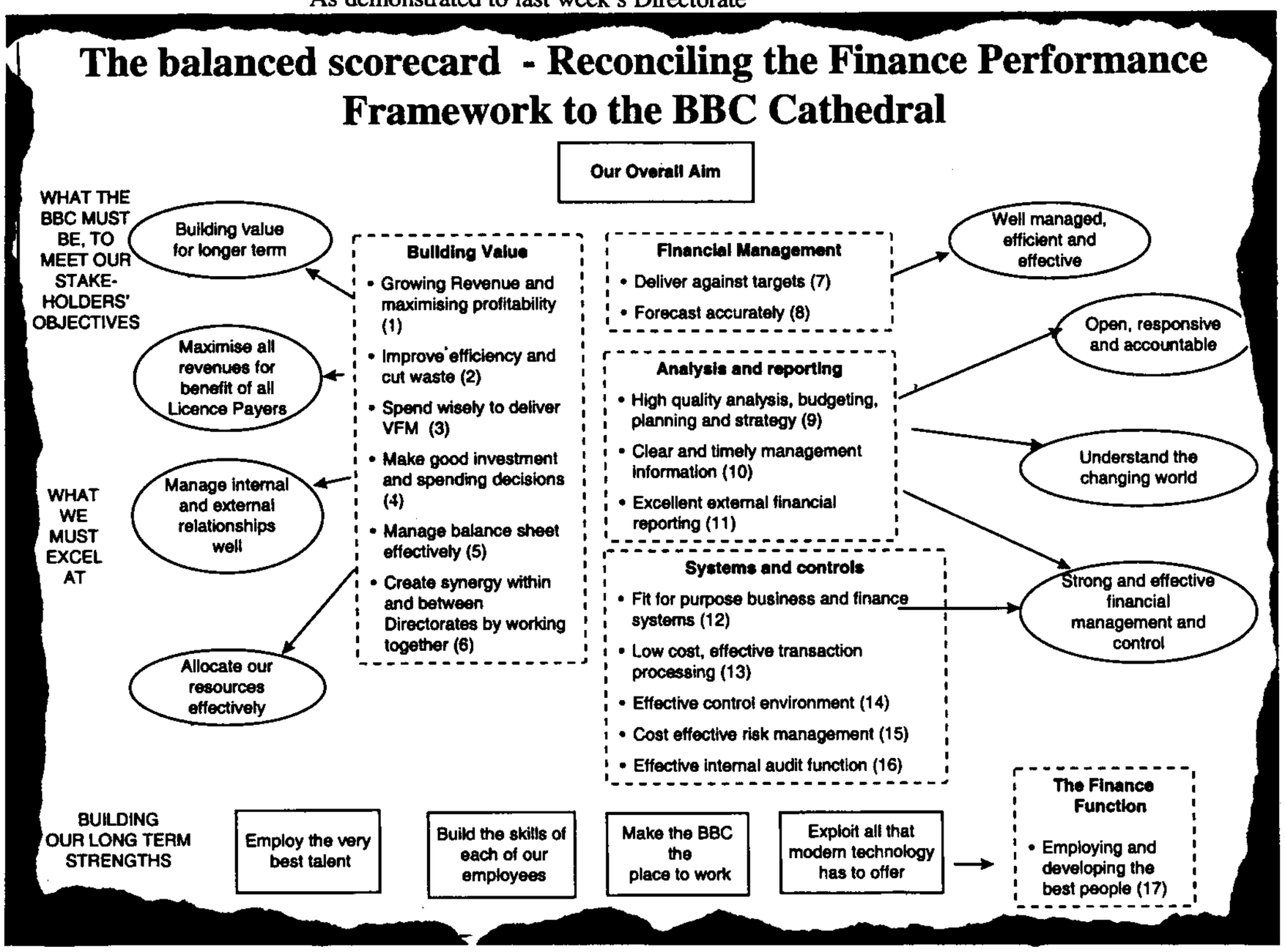
Like I.T. or lump it



FANTASY TELEVISION

THE next director-general of the BBC will have his or her work cut out in negotiating the BBC Cathedral.

As demonstrated to last week's Directorate Briefing Meeting *(see accompanying graphic)*, this exciting new edifice is no ordinary cathedral. It is more of a broad church dedicated to, er, Mammon... creating synergy between directorates... high quality analysis... low cost, effective transaction processing... And... well, you try and work it out.


The balanced scorecard - Reconciling the Finance Performance Framework to the BBC Cathedral
Our Overall Aim
WHAT THE BBC MUST BE, TO MEET OUR STAKE-HOLDERS' OBJECTIVES
Building value for longer term
Maximise all revenues for benefit of all Licence Payers
Manage internal and external relationships well
Allocate our resources effectively
WHAT WE MUST EXCEL AT
Building Value
• Growing Revenue and maximising profitability (1)
• Improve efficiency and cut waste (2)
• Spend wisely to deliver VFM (3)
• Make good investment and spending decisions (4)
• Manage balance sheet effectively (5)
• Create synergy within and between Directorates by working together (6)
Financial Management
• Deliver against targets (7)
• Forecast accurately (8)
Analysis and reporting
• High quality analysis, budgeting, planning and strategy (9)
• Clear and timely management information (10)
• Excellent external financial reporting (11)
Systems and controls
• Fit for purpose business and finance systems (12)
• Low cost, effective transaction processing (13)
• Effective control environment (14)
• Cost effective risk management (15)
• Effective internal audit function (16)
Well managed, efficient and effective
Open, responsive and accountable
Understand the changing world
Strong and effective financial management and control
BUILDING OUR LONG TERM STRENGTHS
Employ the very best talent
Build the skills of each of our employees
Make the BBC the place to work
Exploit all that modern technology has to offer
The Finance Function
• Employing and developing the best people (17)

MODESTY UPDATE

APRIL's edition of *BBC Music Magazine* carries an interview with conductor Neville Marriner on "the music that changed me" in which he was asked to nominate five pieces of music that inspire him. Four of his choices were discs featuring the versatile maestro, er, Neville Marriner.

Plugged In

Albert Square hardman Ross Kemp feared malaria would put him out for the count — and KO his chances of watching Lennox Lewis's big fight. He was gutted when doctors told him he wouldn't get out of hospital in time to watch the battle with Evander Holyfield. But with a quick one-two the *News of the World* stepped in and got staff at the Princess Grace Hospital in London to tune into Sky and let Ross watch the undisputed world heavyweight championship.

News of the World

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

MEDIA NEWS

OXFORD university now has no fewer than two professors sponsored by the Dirty Digger, champion of academic standards.

Following the acclaimed Rupert Murdoch chair in English Language, lucky students now have the opportunity to attend a series of lectures by the News International Visiting Professor in Broadcast Media.

This turns out to be Prof David Elstein, previously responsible for the cerebral Sky One and now the distinguished theoretician behind the bonkerama known as Channel 5. Elstein's reemergence in the Murdoch fold, albeit in academic guise, suggests he may be tiring of life at Channel 5 — which, though not as poorly watched as most Sky services, lacks its high media profile and political clout. He has applied to be director-general of the BBC but stands no chance whatever of getting the job.

Rupert's daughter Elisabeth Murdoch has not been a great success at Sky. (Remember the Duchess of York's chatshow, anyone?) If she doesn't get her act together, Prof Elstein could soon be recruited by the University of Isleworth (formerly Sam Chisholm Polytechnic) to sort things out.

SIX months into the digital revolution, Sky claims its set top boxes are selling like hot cakes. But there is disquiet among potential customers at what they are allowing into their homes.

It's not the wall-to-wall soft porn and American sitcoms on Sky's schedule they have a problem with; it is the hardware. The set top "digibox" allowing viewers to receive a digital signal also contains a modem connected to the phone line. If this is disconnected at any time, the owner is liable to a charge of £160.

But why should the digibox be making, or indeed receiving, phonecalls at all? On this point many customers have found Sky somewhat evasive. *New Scientist* magazine last month looked into the matter but drew a blank. Though it found that the digiboxes do indeed dial into Sky headquarters in the middle of the night, using a freephone number, it could not find out what information was being transmitted.

The most likely explanation is that the Big Brother box sends information about a customer's viewing habits. This would enable Sky — and any other company to which it passes the information — to tailor their junk mail and sales pitches to individual customers. That is the sort of practice the European Union was trying to reform in a directive which should have become law in the data protection act in Britain last October. The act, however, is on hold while the home office consults various "interested parties" in the business world.

Such parties include Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB and the big supermarkets (who can exploit loyalty card applications) and the internet service providers (who can monitor exactly what websites are being viewed and what emails are being sent by customers). Since many of these are either patrons of "new" Labour, or the business giants they are courting, it remains to be seen if the government's alleged commitment to personal privacy will extend beyond the foreign secretary's sex life.

In the meantime Sky digital subscribers continue to transmit more useful info from their TV sets than they receive through them.

THE creatives at ad agency Bates Dorland who dreamed up the new TV commercial for the Halifax must have a sense of humour — or an expensive mortgage with their client.

The ad shows a disbeliefing punter confronted by Mr Building Society Man and features a 1975 reggae track by Burning Spear. The title of the song? "Slavery Days".

Fred Dibnah's
INDUSTRIAL AGE
ONCE A GREAT PLACE OF INNOVATION & PRODUCTION ...
WITH THOUSANDS OF WORKERS...
BUT WITH LOW WAGES WORKING CONDITIONS BECAME ABOMINABLE...
AS THE BOSSES BECAME OBSCENELY RICH...
TERMINAL DECLINE SET IN...
AND IT ENDED UP A HERITAGE CENTRE
THE BBC EXPERIENCE
BROAD-CASTING HOUSE
DG Wanted
Ron Pyrah

MORE MEDIA

CONSULTANTS hired by Radio Four controller James Boyle to improve the station's working environment were quick to identify the main source of discontent: "a huge amount of continuous change — particularly as a result of staff turnover at all levels".

The way to lance this particular boil, a preliminary report from the "Chalybeate Project" suggests, is to forge a new operational approach reliant upon "a shared participative style... to manage this continuous change". As opposed to, say, a system that allows any one individual to stay put for a reasonable length of time.

BBC bosses at Broadcasting House in Cardiff clearly have time on their hands.

Not only have they been lingering in the canteen long enough to notice that kitchen staff are tuning into the non-BBC local wireless station Red Dragon as they worked. They even found time to make this the subject of a special management meeting where they decreed that the kitchen radio must from now on be tuned to BBC Radio Wales.

TV producer Patrick McCreanor, whose docu-soap *Cumbria Tales* was pulled by the BBC last July after the *Eye* unmasked it as a plug for a pub he owned in the village of Ireby, is back in action.

A plethora of shots of Paddy's Bar, featuring sing-songs and scantily-clad lovelies, was deemed a "potential conflict of interest", breaking the BBC's producer guidelines.

What finer vehicle for Mr McCreanor's comeback than as executive producer of *Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age*, the latest series from the man who won the hearts of prime-time viewers by toppling Victorian factory chimneys.

Now Paddy's Bar has outlived its usefulness, could Fred's next project be the demolition of Cumbrian public houses?

THE *Sun* tied itself in knots over the BBC docu-soap *Jailbirds*, which follows inmates in New Hall women's prison.

As well as a centre page spread revealing "the sickening truth behind this television charade" — shockingly, the prisoners are criminals — the paper also carried a scathing editorial.

"No wonder the BBC's ratings are in freefall," it thundered. "Is this what we pay our licence fees for, so the BBC can give criminal low life a platform for self-righteous bleating?... Our advice to viewers is this: Stick to ITV's wholesome *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*."

Oddly the rag forgot to mention that the "wholesome" ITV gameshow is sponsored by, er, the *Sun*, and that only a few days earlier one of its winners had been revealed to have 52 criminal convictions for drug offences, theft, burglary and kicking a puppy to death.

Consistency has never been the *Sun*'s strong point — which is probably why the same day's TV pages carried the following puff: "ONE TO WATCH — *Jailbirds*, BBC1, 9.30pm".

CHARLES RUNCIE, the BBC "Editor Of Sport, Newsgathering", recently lectured journalism students at Bournemouth University on the future of sports coverage at the Beeb — or rather the lack of it since Sky and Channel 4 started buying up everything with balls.

Runcie expressed strong opinions on rugby league, especially the super league games broadcast by Sky. He described the sport succinctly as "big blokes bashing into each other", and asked his audience if they had seen any of the games. "They're so dull."

Budding hacks in the audience were well trained enough to scent a story. One, Matt Anniss, tipped off *Total Rugby League* magazine, which duly ran a piece on Runcie's comments under the headline "BBC Boss Hits League". It was followed in the next issue by a refutation from Runcie, predictably claiming that his remarks had been taken out of context.

But what was the reaction of Anniss's course tutors to his scoopette? Did they congratulate him on the initiative he displayed as a result of their training? Er, no. Anniss was summoned to see senior tutor Jaldeep Katwala, who had been contacted by an enraged Runcie. The student was told that reporting on the record remarks made by a public figure in his professional capacity was, er, "unprofessional and unethical".

EDUCASHUN

A FASCINATING document arrives concerning Year 6 Sats — the tests junior school children sit, the results of which determine where their school ends up in the all important league tables.

The document details what teachers in some areas of the country not a million miles from East Anglia could do to improve their school's test score and hence their eventual league position.

1 When invigilating walk up and down the rows and point to any errors you notice. A cough may help. A variation is to ask the child if he has checked his work thoroughly and allude to a particular section.

2 Open the sealed packs of papers a day or two early, photocopy the tests and send them home for practice. This is a worse variation on using sight of the papers to plan revision.

3 If a child applies to your school who looks as if they won't reach the required standard, then do everything you can to stop them from joining.

4 (A complicated one.) Let all of your Year 6 sit the tests but do not send all the papers in. Pretend not that some children were ill, but that your Year 6 is smaller than it actually is. Thus your percentage will be higher. (This could be picked up by careful auditing, but few schools get audited.)

Obviously no teacher or head would ever *do* any of the above because such cheating would be totally illegal. So what can this document be going on about?

CHURCH NEWS

IT was in Holy Week last year that Dr Wesley Carr, dean of Westminster Abbey, suspended the former organist and choirmaster Dr Martin Neary and his wife and assistant Penelope for financial misconduct.

The Nearys appealed against the dismissal, but last December the retired law lord Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, appointed by special commission of the queen to hear the case, upheld Dr Carr's decision.

Lord Jauncey's judgment was not wholly in favour of the abbey. While he agreed that a private enterprise set up by the Nearys to handle concert fees had breached financial regulations, he declared that the abbey's course of action, sacking the Nearys without detailing the case against them and attempting to hold a disciplinary hearing only days later "must score gamma minus on the scale of natural justice".

If Dr Neary still feels betrayed and embittered on the anniversary of these momentous events, he can always seek solace in the following passage from *Tested by the Cross*, a book of Lenten meditations.

"Throughout history Judas has been maligned as the one who betrayed Jesus. Christians have forever damned him. Preachers speculate about him. They confidently attribute to him motives of which he was probably unaware and innocent... But they rarely, if ever, asked why what Judas did actually mattered. It may have been wrong, but did it seriously affect the course of events?... Judas represents a very human sort of responsibility. He has a vision of what might be and what ought to be. He tries to bring it about. His is an independent mind. When he acts he is decisive. No one now wishes to be called 'Judas'. But most of us would like to be such a character."

And who was the author in question? Step forward... Dr Wesley Carr.

MINISTRY OF TRUTH

AUTHOR and journalist Tony Geraghty has spent more than 100 days on police bail since his home was raided on 3 December. He was arrested and taken to Leominster police station where he was questioned repeatedly about the sources for his recent book, *The Irish War*. He was told he was suspected of breaking section five of the official secrets act, which carries prison sentences of up to two years.

By any definition Tony Geraghty is suspected of committing a serious crime. But here's a strange thing. He was raided and arrested not by the West Mercia police, which are responsible for crime in his area, but by the ministry of defence police which has no power to deal with serious crime. Mr Geraghty is convinced the MoD police — affectionately known as Modplod — were acting illegally and outside their powers.

Modplod was set up by act of parliament in 1987. Its purpose was to protect and police MoD property and personnel. Section two of the act gives Modplods the powers and privileges of constables "in relation to matters connected with anything done under a contract entered into by the secretary of state for defence for the purposes of his department or the defence council". No one knows what this means.

Archie Hamilton, who was parliamentary under secretary for defence at the time, told a worried backbencher that the clause was inserted to "give us freedom to be able to put ministry of defence police on the premises of private contractors and manufacturers who are manufacturing defence equipment... it could extend to fraud involved in the purchase of clothing or something of a relatively unspectacular form."

Again and again Hamilton rubbed home the point that Modplod was not going to get involved in serious crime. "Serious crime, like all crime, is the responsibility of the home department force," he stressed.

In 1996 Modplod was part-privatised. It became an agency and its chief constable became eligible for a bonus. One result is that questions asked about Modplod are no longer answered by the elected government to which it is still theoretically responsible. For instance, when Labour MP Tam Dalyell and the general secretary of the National Union of Journalists, John Foster, wrote in January to defence secretary George Robertson asking about Tony Geraghty's case, they got no answer from Robertson. An answer came instead from Wally "Bonus" Boreham, chief constable of Modplod, describing his force as "a civilian police force independent of political or departmental influence".

Tony Geraghty then wrote to the attorney-general Sir John Morris asking for guidance about Modplod's legal powers and got a reply not from Morris but from a Mr P.A. Crowther, agency secretary and director of finance & administration of Modplod. Crowther said he was "satisfied that the officers who arrested you and searched your premises had jurisdiction to do so".

But had they? Tony Geraghty is a civilian. He is not involved at any level in manufacturing sophisticated defence equipment or anything else for the MoD. Indeed he does nothing for the ministry and never occupies any of their premises. He was searched and arrested on suspicion of what is on any reckoning a most rare and serious crime which, if the 1987 assurances meant anything, should have been passed over to the home department police.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER

THAT NEW RESTAURANT'S OPENED ON THE HIGH STREET, QUIN
WORD IS THAT IT'S OVER-CROWDED AND SERVING TINY PORTIONS AT EXTORTIONATE PRICES
WE'LL NEVER GET IN!
I SPENT MY ENTIRE BRUNCH TRYING TO BOOK
COFFEE

AS THE "banana war" between the United States and the European Union escalates into the "beef hormone war", with Washington threatening to block a further billion-dollars worth of EU exports to America, there is something very odd about the way Britain has suddenly become the odd man out — the only EU country which seems happy to allow the US to sell its hormone-implanted beef for European consumption.

Until recently, along with the rest of the EU the Labour government was implacably opposed to hormone-implanted meat. There are very good scientific grounds for this.

The hormones designed to fatten up the cattle in record time are implanted into the animals' ears. Trials with electronic ear tags, which are of a similar size and shape to hormone implants, have shown they have a nasty propensity to migrate round the animal's body. In the case of the EU's compulsory cattle identification scheme, this was sufficient to convince Brussels that they should drop any plan for electronic ear-tagging, in favour of the cumbersome plastic double tags which are now giving such grief to farmers as the poor animals keep tearing their ears in an effort to remove them.

But since it seems just as likely that hormone implants will travel round the animal's body in the same way, this means the consumer could run the risk of consuming not just a slight residual trace of the hormones but the full whack when the implant reemerges more or less intact in the middle of a beefburger or on the plate. The consequences could well be that the unfortunate burger addict starts to fatten up like a Texas steer. Or changes sex. Or worse.

The real mystery, however, is why Labour should suddenly have switched its position to support these imports. There was no sign of a change in policy when Dr Jack Cunningham was agriculture minister. He of course won his Phd for his work on OP pesticides — and as an MP declared a £20,000 a year retainer for representing the interests of the pharmaceutical company Albright and Wilson.

But now he has become the Great Enforcer, Dr Cunningham has been very much aware of the displeasure of the US chemical giant Monsanto over the sensitivity of some of his colleagues over genetically modified organisms (GMOs). So much so that the company has even hinted it might move its lucrative British operations to some other more hospitable country.

As a scientist Dr Cunningham knows almost as much about GMOs as he does about OPs. When he was last year opening a new laboratory for another GMO manufacturer, Zeneca, he proudly announced that his daughter had just won her own Phd for research on GMOs.

It just happens that one of the biggest manufacturers of hormone implants for cattle in the US is none other than Monsanto, which no doubt will be greatly consoled by Britain's decision to support the import of hormone-drenched US beef. In view of the obvious dangers to consumers of eating this stuff, it may, however, seem a little odd that no objections are now being raised to it by the same government which was so wondrously sensitive to the risks of eating beef on the bone that it made it a criminal offence to sell a T-bone steak. Come to think of it, the minister who put that law on to the statute book was none other than "Jack Boots" himself. As the lady said, it is a funny old world.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

SIGNAL FAILURES

What a truck up!

TRUCKERS who blocked London streets last week hoped to win sympathy by playing on the public's general dislike of rising fuel tax. But the real root of the protest was the hauliers' fear of having to dance to the same tune as their competitors.

Over the past few years several studies (one by a royal commission) have concluded that road hauliers' costs may actually cover only as little as 59 percent of the true amount they cost the country at large, partly because of the damage caused to roads by heavy lorries.

The exact figure is difficult to pinpoint — it depends on factors like the financial value of lives lost in accidents involving lorries — but the latest study, from Oxford Economic Research Associates, suggests hauliers would have to pay up to £2.5bn a year in *extra* taxes to cover their full costs. This does not take account of the advantages many hauliers gain through speeding, overloading and other dangerous practices and the extra cost to the industry if it had to pay for improved safety and effective policing.

Whichever figures are taken, British hauliers clearly enjoy huge hidden subsidy while their rivals — rail, shipping and pipelines — operate without comparable handouts. In 1998-99 the government's main input to rail freight was about £32m in grants towards freight terminals and specific train runs. This careful use of public money contrasts dramatically with the indiscriminate scattering of road haulage subsidy.

Increasing the fuel duty for hauliers is a modest attempt by the government to narrow slightly the gap between road haulage and its rivals. While the costs of those rivals are directly linked to the distance and tonnage moved, hauliers usually quote much lower rates because, once they have paid annual duties, they have unlimited free access to the road network.

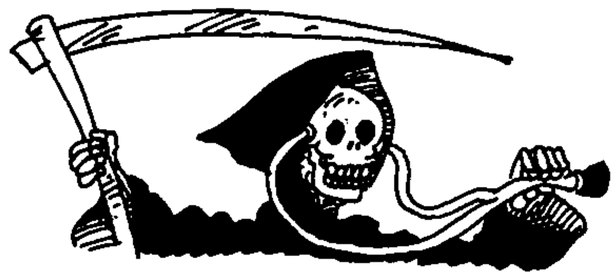
There are several options for taxing road hauliers by volume and distance, but the simplest is through fuel duty — which also encourages investment in fuel-efficient lorries. There may be economic reasons why movement of freight in the UK should continue to be subsidised, but does it need as much as £2.5bn a year and do other carriers, such as rail, deserve a slice of this enormous cake too?

The chief argument of the whingeing truckers is that hauliers in other European countries pay less for some aspects of the business, such as fuel duty. They forget to mention that in many foreign countries haulage firms face higher costs in corporation or employment taxes, road tolls and other elements. They also forget to say that rail freight is highly subsidised in most other countries, so rail and road are on a more equal footing than in Britain. Typically rail may carry about 20 percent of freight in mainland European countries, compared with about 6 percent in Britain.

Last week's protest was a cry of frustration by an industry which, as part of the powerful roads lobby, has had successive governments under its thumb since the 1960s when state-owned British Rail was first forced to give up many of its freight activities.

In bringing fair competition between road and rail a fraction closer, the government is using its democratic mandate to encourage greater use of the railways for freight. British road hauliers have suddenly found themselves unable to lobby the government into submission and so — just like the French workers they despise for blocking Channel ports — they are now trying mob politics to bully the government into further protectionism.

'Dr B. Ching'



DOING THE ROUNDS

BARRY JACKSON, president of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS), has swiftly denied M.D's allegations that the RCS knows the identity of individual surgeons who participate in confidential audit.

A specific allegation he denied in a letter to the *Guardian* (9 March) was that the college has no idea of the identity of the surgeon who, in the National Prostatectomy Audit for 1992-93, had a death rate of six times the average. However, a transcript of an interview with his RCS colleague, the late Brendan Devlin, for *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor* (BBC2, 13 November 1996), tells a different story.

Donna Bernard: If you were going for a prostate gland removal you wouldn't be able to tell from the report which surgeon has a death rate six times the average. He's only known as number 169. Why does it have to remain so confidential and secret?

Brendan Devlin: The point is that to get the information, we need to establish trust between my outfit and the individual surgeons, and if the individual surgeons were thinking the data was going to be used for a witch-hunt or something like that, they wouldn't trust us to collate the data. I don't think we would get the information out of them in a sensible way.

DB: But you are aware who they are?

BD: Yes.

DB: So would you go to number 169 for a prostate gland removal?

BD: Number 169, I'm not sure whether he's a urologist. I would go to a surgeon who does a lot of an operation and does it well.

DB: Which is fine if you can look them up in the royal college's secret database. But what about the rest of us?

When the story was broadcast there was no complaint of factual inaccuracy from the Royal College of Surgeons. So why does the new president claim the college has no idea as to the identity of the surgeons? If the college wishes to avoid compulsory published audit on a named surgeon basis, and any subsequent witch-hunting, it needs to show it has acted on the poor results of any audit it is involved in.

If, as Jackson suggests, "the college has no more idea of their identity than M.D. does", how can they prove to the public that number 169 has been sorted out, either by retraining or retirement? The college now boasts a rapid response force to sort out incompetence. But what use is that if the audit remains so confidential the identity of the poor performers are only known by number?

Restricting audit to an extent that only the individuals being audited know their results means self-regulation is entirely reliant on the insight, conscience and judgement of individual doctors. As recent high profile cases have testified, you wouldn't want to bet your life on that. My bet, as Brendan Devlin admitted, is that the college knows far more than it is letting on. So tell us, Mr President. What happened to Number 169?

● AN inquiry at East Anglia Ambulance Trust (*Eyes passim*) has found a catalogue of management failings, not least a tendency to "overstate" emergency response times. A computer analysis showed "unnatural peaking" of the time taken to reach patients "just within" the eight and 19 minute targets. Why? Control room staff were estimating and "retrospectively" altering response times without checking first with the crews.

The inquiry found that on some occasions guesswork was legitimate given "system failures", but no record was kept when times were altered and there was no explanation to support the alterations. Since the system was tightened last year, recorded response times have fallen by 5 percent. Report author Paul Kemp described the service as "low cost, low quality" but made no mention of the bullying and intimidation of staff who dared speak out.

Trust chief executive Tony Blaber retired last month on grounds of ill-health.

● THE NHS has lost millions by underselling the north block of Royal Brompton hospital. An initial contract to sell to Brackenbury Properties included a clawback if flats built on the site were sold for more than £540 a square foot, but this fell through in March 1996 when Brackenbury failed to secure funding. A new contract was agreed in December 1996 but without clawback. The National Audit Office (NAO) estimates this cost the NHS at least £6.8m.

M.D.

HOW TO EAT well again on a wheat, glutton and dairy free diet. £2.75 from Merton Books.
Daily Telegraph

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

MADCHESTER GAMES

THE 2002 commonwealth games, due to be held in Manchester, is a project dear to the heart of the city's ex-council leader Graham Stringer, now Labour MP for Manchester Blackley.

Despite the failure of previous events that Stringer had hoped would put the city on the map — such as his Global Forum '94 and the World Table Tennis Championships '97, which left council taxpayers facing a bill of £800,000 — Stringer insisted the games would break even (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*). He even managed to obtain £2m sponsorship from Manchester Airport, his old employer.

Now, however, it seems that his new employer — the government — will have to bung even larger amounts at the games, which need to find another £50m sharpish if they are not to be an absolute disaster.

Latest discovery is that the site at Dumplington, east Manchester, could be above a former mineshaft. In any event the ground is badly contaminated from its time as a former gas works. Surveyors fear it could cost at least £500,000 to clean up.

The site is jointly owned by Peel Holdings and Manchester Airport in an outfit called Ringway Developments. Robert Hough, chair of the games committee, is also deputy chair of Peel. Sir Gilbert Thompson, former chief of Manchester airport, a big name in the Global Forum fiasco and a mate of Graham Stringer, was enlisted to help pull in 2002 cash last month. Many Manchester people see this as the kiss of death.

LEAR WE GO AGAIN

WESTMINSTER's former environment and planning director Tony Lear, who left the council "by mutual agreement" at Christmas with a £320,000 package after a chaotic 18-month reign, has surfaced across the river in Lewisham where he is touting himself as an environmental consultant.

Lear's achievements at Westminster included a disastrous "review" of environmental services. It cost the council £1m, including £500,000 for consultants. While he embarked on his expensive reorganisation plans, which came to nothing, rubbish uncollected by contractors Onyx rotted in the streets (see *Eyes passim*) and there was a scandal after it was revealed that many shops and restaurants were not being inspected for food safety.

In a letter to staff last week acting director Peter Rogers described the regime he inherited: "Poor operational performance... widespread use of consultants created confusion among managers and staff... communications especially poor... low morale..." And so on.

Lear is no stranger to Lewisham. In 1993 he came within a whisker of becoming its chief executive (see *Eye* 836). His appointment was blocked after it was revealed that two of the councillors who interviewed him, Ian Arnold and Dave Sullivan, had previously won contracts worth £80,000 to carry out training consultancy work for the environmental services department Lear used to run in Brent. Sullivan, by an amazing coincidence, is now council leader in Lewisham. So at least Lear would be among friends again.

● MEANWHILE all 800 housing staff in Lewisham were ordered to attend Blackheath concert hall to watch, at a cost to taxpayers of £15,000, a video explaining "Best Value" — a hymn to "new" Labour, complete with "Things Can Only get Better" theme tune. Annual leave was cancelled and requests for non-attendance had to be submitted in writing. The "vision" staff are expected to embrace, alas, involves half of them losing their jobs as neighbourhood housing offices are closed and the management of council housing is privatised.

SHE'S BEEN QUANGOED

CALDERDALE council's Blairite leader Pam Warhurst has found her council duties onerous of late as they have been interfering with the impressive list of lucrative quango appointments she has collected in the past year.

Ms Warhurst has just been appointed vice-chair of the new Countryside Agency, set up to implement the government's right-to-roam legislation (£13,000 pa). She adds this to chairmanship of Calderdale NHS trust (£19,000) and a seat on the Yorkshire and Humberside regional development agency (£7,000). Glitzy stuff compared to her other job — at Todmorden's wholefood co-op!

Now she has decided to jump before being pushed by irritated voters who put her in a position to take up these high-profile appointments in the first place. She has announced that she will not be standing in the May council elections.

HERE COMES BRUCIE

THE resignation of Leeds city councillor Robert Finnigan after being caught downloading internet porn on council premises has created an opening for politically ambitious PR smoothie Stuart Bruce, who has been selected to fight Finnigan's safe Middleton seat in May.

Bruce, who is also in charge of Labour's media campaign in the north for this summer's Euro-elections, is so on-message he once initiated disciplinary hearings against a Labour councillor who jokingly admitted to being "an old Trot". Clearly a Westminster career beckons.

Bruce's PR company Networx has spent much of the past year promoting the North and Yorkshire Business Forum, a typically Blairite project set up to give influential businessmen access to senior Labour politicians. Bruce set up the famous photo-opportunity in January 1998 when the then minister without portfolio Peter Mandelson took time out from addressing 160 businessmen in Selby to visit nearby Kellingley colliery, emerging with blackened face to pledge the government's support for what remained of the coal industry.

This PR triumph by Bruce was slightly tarnished when press photographs of Mandy wearing a miner's helmet and luminous jerkin planted the first seeds of the king of spin being a Village People-style gay icon. The vest, as they say, is history.

● ENFIELD council staff are aggrieved that they will soon have to pay to park at work — on average £377.40 a year, deducted from salary at source.

The charge, part of the Labour council's £12m cuts package, effectively claws back most of any possible pay rise this year. Enfield's 66 councillors, who last year voted themselves a rise in basic allowance from £1,500 to £6,000 a year, have generously made an exception to the new parking charges — for themselves anyway.

NEWHAM SOCIAL SERVICES

Domestic Violence Co-ordinator

£22,600 - £24,400

Newham Council advertisement

Pseuds Corner

Although I am possibly condemned to remain on Earth for the next 40 years or so, my self will be considered irrelevant, and my views quaint, old-fashioned and retrograde, at least until the cyborgs are wiped out by internecine cyberterrorism and we find ourselves back where we started.

GERMAINE GREER
Independent

The event will feature presentations from JBA and guest speakers, who will demonstrate how your business can gain competitive advantage by using active process optimisation. Plus, a series of seminar streams which will cover the detail of new functions and partnerships that enhance our ERP family and world renowned industry specific solutions.

Invitation to 'JBA Encounter '99'

Testing the Limits

Can sex be educational? *Testing the Limits* aims to prove that it can be! From Trevor's amazingly accommodating backside in *Arse*, to the final climax of *Andy*, where masturbation and interior design collide in the ultimate gay film, 11 directors explore their responses to sex, pornography, fetish and desire. But the programme is not just light-hearted. Every image in William Jones' excellent documentary, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography*, is taken from gay erotic videos produced in Eastern Europe since the introduction of capitalism. This film avoids titillation, but exposes the real pornography of human exploitation, with sequences of a British director prodding and fondling the models in a

supposed 'screen test' that reveal the sex industry at its most unappealing.

Programme, 13th London
Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

28 Dead Salmon

The name comes from a painting bill for the Library at Kedleston of 1805, though in fact analysis suggests that the colour is far closer to Ointment Pink. Dead Salmon, as depicted here, is

rather more tired in character than it once was.

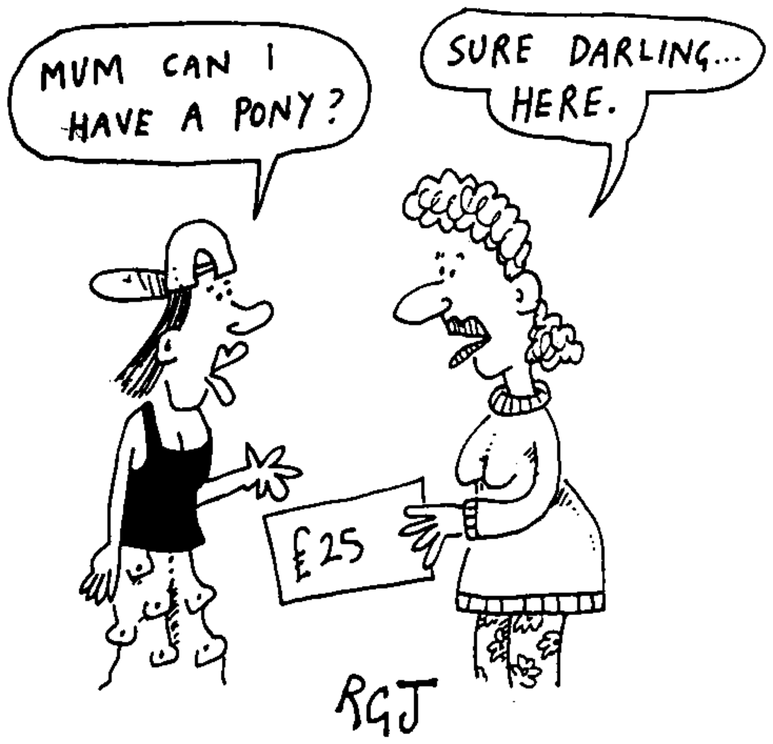
National Trust Range of Paints
Colour Card

Some experiences never surface. There are moments that live contained, never caught between eyes, or slipped from lips into hearts. Where do words go when they are unheard? They linger in the air between you, their intention gone, direction unsure — they evaporate, dissipate slowly and leave inky residues under your skin. They stiffen the muscles and inform the pulse; the body a reservoir filled with words lost from the beginning of your lives... and then, one drop too many the reservoir overflows the body must speak...

Flyer for 'numb',
Edinburgh Fringe 98

CONTRIBUTORS: Andrew Hoxley, APR, Rupert Pitt, Cath Fletcher, J. Morrison, J. Strube.

£10 paid for entries



Modern kids

POLICE 5

MERSEYSIDE police clattered into the air recently in an operation that made the Keystone cops look like a serious bunch of crime fighters.

A man facing burglary charges who was on police bail became suspicious when he was stopped by Merseyside's finest nearly every time he went out in his car. Examination of the vehicle revealed that a tracking device had been attached to it.

This he took to his solicitor, Rex Makin, who placed the object — which made a sinister ticking sound — inside his safe. Half-an-hour later, Makin was due to be interviewed by Sky TV about the recent European court of human rights ruling on the Bulger case live in his office. When the crew arrived they found there was strange interference on their satellite equipment, so everyone trooped out into the street where everything worked satisfactorily — apart from the slight nuisance caused by the sound of a police helicopter circling overhead.

On returning to his office Makin found Inspector Peter Jones of Liverpool criminal intelligence (*sic*) waiting for him. The inspector muttered: "I believe you have something belonging to us." A red-faced Jones then departed with the tracking device. The safe was let off with a caution.

MERSEYSIDE does have *one* claim to distinction: it tops the national league for complaints from the public about the use of CS spray, with three times as many registered as against the Met.

In Merseyside's canteen culture, which earnest new chief constable Norman Bettison is anxious to change, this is regarded as a terrific laugh. One officer, regarded as something of a champion with the CS can, is introduced to fellow knackers with the words: "He doesn't care — he'll spray anyone!"

Concern has also been expressed about the high level of sickness in the force and the cost to the public purse. The worry is also what some coppers actually get up to when off sick. PC Paul Brett has just been sentenced to two years in prison for an assault committed while he was supposed to be convalescing at a home for sick officers in the genteel Yorkshire town of Harrogate. His ailments did not, alas, deter Brett from going on the piss with a gang of other cops and breaking the leg of a local man in a pub brawl.

Letters

Private Eye

Doesn't add up

Sir,

In reply to Tony Hills (Letters, EYE 972), who huffily defends a particularly choice piece of pseudery as a "description of a statistical process": I myself am numerate (and am not unduly troubled by percentages) yet, strangely enough, I could make little sense of this load of mathmo-gibberish. A sentence (or phrase) consisting solely of technical jargon does not escape being pretentious just because said jargon is the common currency of the subject in question.

It is a not uncommon occurrence in academic circles that mediocre intellect tries feebly to disguise its shortcomings by arming itself with an array of specialist terminology. What better home for this sort of behaviour than in Pseuds Corner?

Yours faithfully,
HAL CHARLES,

Via e-mail.

PS: Loved the Linda McCartney piece.

Lookalike

Monica

Kate

Sir,

I enclose remarkably similar pictures of Monica Lewinsky (famous for going down on a Titan) and Kate Winslet (famous for not going down on the Titanic). Could they perhaps be related? (Both pics are from the same spread of the SUN, 4 March.)

Yours faithfully,
STEVE ELLIS,

London N11.

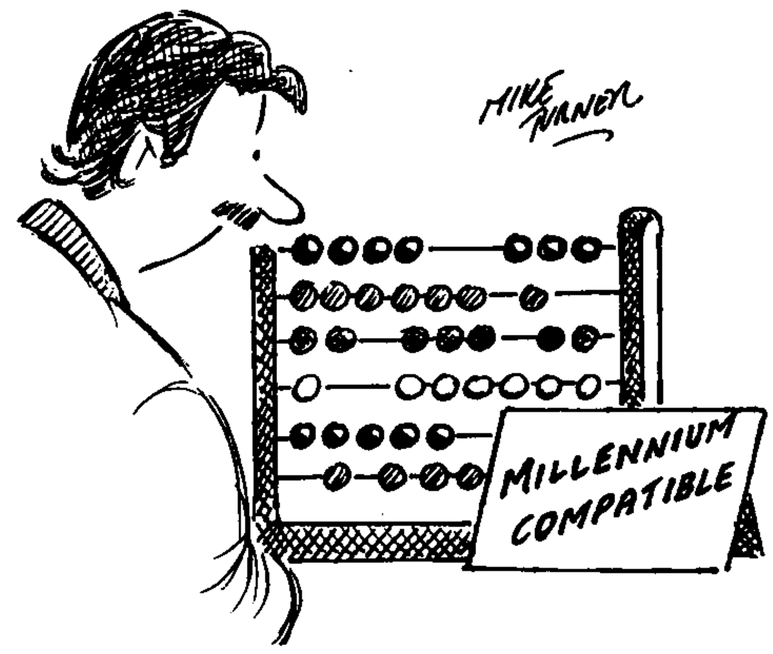
Breeding will out

Sir,

I was outraged to read Mr McLellan's letter (EYE 972) claiming that his paper was not duped by Edinburgh students, the students were left red-faced and your own publication misunderstood the situation.

The journalist ringing around New Town addresses was attempting to find a cheap story about the high breeding and wealth of Edinburgh university undergraduates. Given the contempt she deserved by four, trusty ex-public school boys, they conned her into believing that they had the blue blood she was after and invited her around for tea, cakes and a photo shoot.

Although their "rue was rumbled", the paper decided to print the article anyway. And whilst the "identities were accurate", the backgrounds were not. All boys' parents are alive and well, Nick's "cannon gun from his hereditary home" was stolen last year from a local pub. In fact, the entire lie was printed in full.



I am surprised the editor is not embarrassed to have printed such a pathetic story. However, I do know that the culprits were only "red-faced" when they cried with laughter at their story being printed by a local daily and then a national weekly newspaper.

Yours,
GENERAL SIR STEVEN SIGRIST,

Duke of Britain (Economics Undergrad. Edin).

Foot in mouth?

Sir,

When it comes to his obsession with the subject Colin Wallace and Fred Holroyd ("Colin and Fred" to us journalists who haven't taken their fantasies seriously) Paul Foot, an otherwise brilliant journalist, has written a lot of crap.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WARE,

BBC, Panorama.

Glasgow dangers

Sir,

Paul Foot's piece comparing my fate with that of the disgraced former principal of Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), Stan Mason and his large payoff at public expense (High Principals, Eye 972), is accurate in almost every respect. I would however take gentle issue with his statement that I made "mildly critical comments" at Senate.

Indeed I made no critical comment at all at Senate. I merely asked that the resignation letter of the external examiner who had resigned on principle (ie, having his decision to fail the radiography students overturned without consultation) be tabled at Senate. This was an entirely reasonable request for me to make, since Senate is the body charged by parliament to uphold the university's academic standards. At Caledonian, however, any action that drew attention to such matters was seen as treasonable, since there were few academic standards which would bear objective scrutiny.

My punishment for this and other crimes of attempting to shine a light on managerial incompetence and dishonesty resulted in my loss of career and livelihood, my health and almost my life. Thus GCU was willing to destroy someone it suspected of making public information it knew to be true concerning the misbehaviour of its senior managers; the very public who pay the salaries of those senior managers.

It might interest your readers to discover that the Darby report into this and other examples of academic and managerial malpractice resulted in the naming of five senior managers as being "unprofessional" or "incompetent" or both. They are all still in post "earning" salaries of over £70k at public expense. Dr John Reid, my MP, has written to the responsible minister, Mrs Helen Liddell asking her what if anything she intends to do about this sorry state of affairs.

Should I hold my breath? In the meantime may I advise anyone going for an X-ray to enquire the source of the radiographer's qualification; might it be that a GCU degree signifies "frying tonight"?

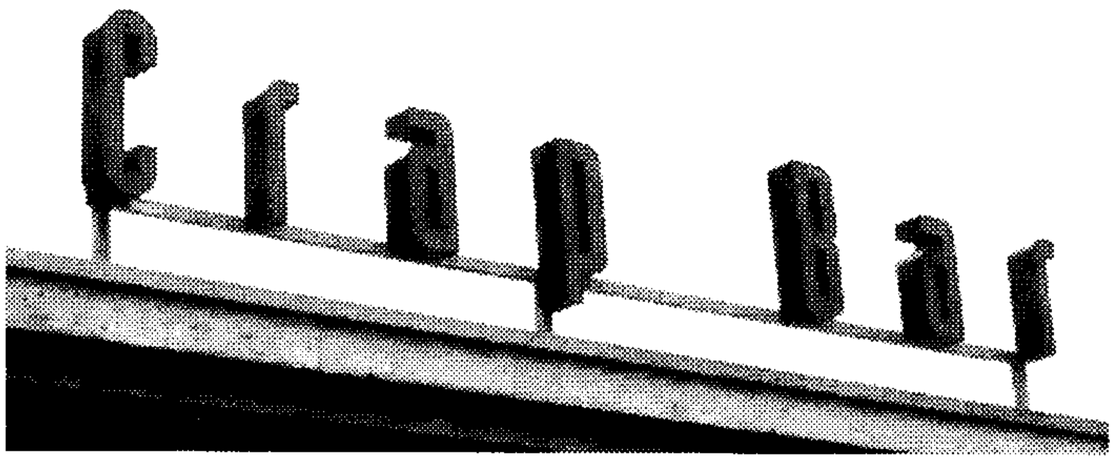
Yours sincerely,
DR JOHN J. O'DOWD,

Bellshill, Lanarkshire.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

SPIRITUAL CENTRE
YOU'LL FIND A LOT OF MODELS ARE NOW DOING 'ASHTANGA YOGA'...
IT'S JUST AN ADVANCED FORM THAT INVOLVES CONTORTING UPSIDE DOWN ON YOUR HANDS. IT FORCES BAD THINGS TO LEAVE YOUR BODY!
YOU MEAN LIKE BAD ENERGIES AND KARMAS?
NO..... I MEAN LIKE BREAKFASTS, LUNCHES AND DINNERS!
PUKE!



I-SPY

Flims, Switzerland

Submitted by Tansy Forrest. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

In de-Nile?

Sir,

Your repeated cruel jibes at Mr Mohamed Al-Fayed show only how little you understand him. Far from being a ruthless megalomaniac with an ego the size of a department store he is a cultivated literary man sensitive to the beauties of English poetry. While going up the Egyptian staircase in his corner shop I noticed, among the tasteful understated reliefs of gods and pharaohs, a quotation from Shelley:

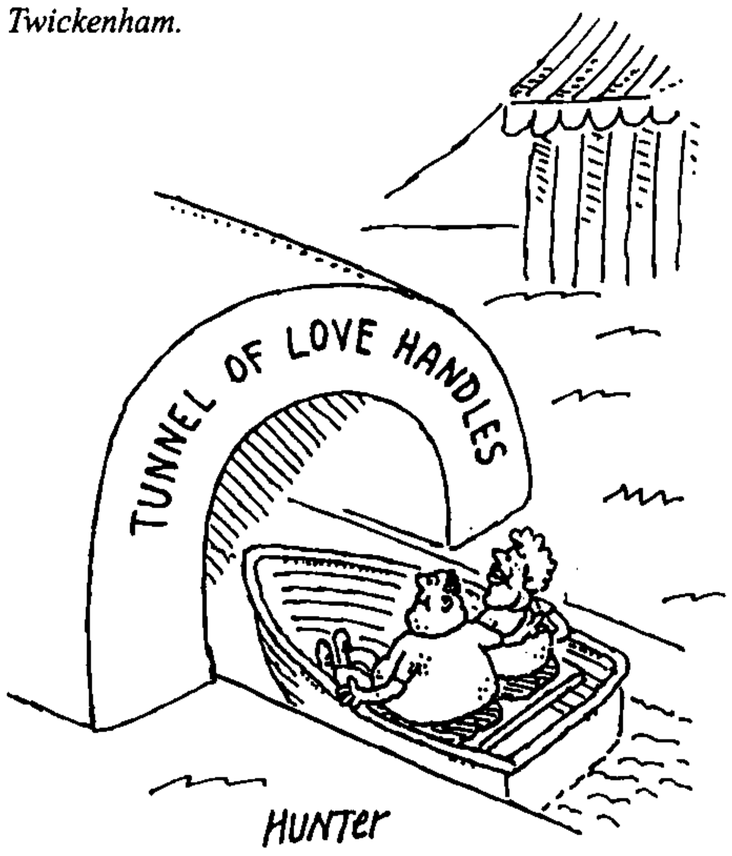
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings.
Look upon my works, ye mighty and despair!"

Mr Al-Fayed is of course fully alive to the real meaning of these lines which is to be grasped by reading the whole sonnet and would not dream of taking a couple of ringing declarations out of context for the purpose of mere self-aggrandizement.

Would he?

Yours faithfully,
SIMON WILLIAMS,

Twickenham.



Price is right

Sir,

Does PRIVATE EYE understand the concept of inflation?

It's just that I can't remember when you last raised the price!

Enjoying the inflationless world.

Regards (keep up the good work),
IAN C. BICKLE,

Belfast.

A word from our sponsor...

Sir,

I would like to clarify the facts relating to Novartis in PRIVATE EYE on 19 February.

The article stated that the Labour Party "received substantial funds for its electoral campaigns from Novartis". It did not.

We have never donated funds to political parties. Our pharmaceutical company sponsored an exhibition stand and a reception at the Labour Party Conference in 1997 to raise awareness of Novartis, a new company formed from the Ciba-Sandoz merger.

The sponsorship, along with a number of other commercial sponsors, is listed in the Labour Party's 1997 Annual Report, published in September 1998.

Yours sincerely,
E.J. FULLAGAR,

Novartis UK Ltd.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

ITV Commentator: *Of course, Ruud Gullit is the only foreigner to have managed an FA Cup winning side.*

Ron Atkinson: *So what's Arsene Wenger then?*

ITV Commentator: *French.*

ITV Sport
(Dave Brickley)

"Jimmy White is known as 'The Nearly Man' of snooker, but a lot of people forget that he's got the second-best record in the World Championship in the 1990s."
STEVE DAVIS, ITV
(Alex Knowles)

"At least 50% of the population are women, and the rest men."
HARRIET HARMAN, Radio 5 Live
(Roy Asser)

"We're members of the European Union now: if you're a Portuguese window-cleaner, you can now come and clean windows in London; if you're a Portuguese footballer, ditto."
DAVID MELLOR, Channel 5
(David Crompton)

"Well, that's knocked the sails out of the wind for Inter."
RON ATKINSON, ITV Sport
(Donald McDonald)

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

AFTER seven years of *Eye* reports on shocking fraud and mismanagement in the European commission, the House of Brussels has finally fallen amid... charges of shocking fraud and mismanagement.

Disgraced commission president Jacques Santer, forced to resign for failing to administer the £65bn budget correctly, has blamed member states for not providing enough money (just as well: the commission has "lost" about £100bn) and he now has the gall to propose to stand as an MEP in June.

His successor is former Italian prime minister Romano Prodi, whose hurried selection by EU heads has to be approved by the European parliament. He is applauded for travelling by train and not chauffeur driven car, but paradoxically he admires Santer's predecessor Jacques Delors — he who demanded a budget increase from £46bn to £60bn to fund his manic empire building.

Having solved Italy's dire financial problems by imposing a European tax, Prodi's proposals to help solve the EU's money problems by harmonising taxes in member states will no doubt please Pauline Green, leader of the socialist MEPs, while horrifying many financiers.

More controversially, under the Amsterdam treaty Prodi will have even wider powers to select 19 commissioners to replace those recently disgraced. But wider presidential powers cannot help a fundamentally shaky institution. Five former judges alleged in a 144-page document that the former commissioners had lost all control of commission finances.

Another project to overcome EU fraud by introducing a European criminal law system with a European public prosecutor (EPP) will be voted on by the European parliament in April. A report by the criminal law committee of our own Law Society questions the status of this Napoleonic-style EPP, who would be able to bring proceedings throughout the EU. Such a move could effectively erode Britain's own legal powers of a separate judge and jury and habeas corpus.

Meanwhile, Europe's wasted funds continue to be channelled through a mafia of obscene proportions. A commission suggestion to monitor fraud more closely by providing its own policing body instead of an independent outside one has been particularly comical. Its present ineffective anti-fraud brigade UCLAF, set up in 1987, later came under the direct control of the manic Jacques Delors (*Eye* 836) himself and was rapidly overwhelmed reading bogus accounts, searching for missing files, deciphering indiscriminate transfers from one project to another and locating vanished funds. Oh — and its work wasn't helped by the total breakdown of the anti-fraud computer database, IRENE.

And what will is there for change? On 1 March last, President Jacques Chirac of France expressed his deep shock to Santer at the prospect of France's Edith Cresson, the research and training commissioner, being challenged in court for mismanagement of funds and nepotism. Would Chirac have defended her? Fortunately he had no need to declare his hand as MEPs demanded that Santer himself should resign for undermining the credibility of the EU.

Neither Cresson nor Santer admitted they had done anything wrong. Indeed, Europe saw all its highly paid commissioners resigning in disgrace, er, with nobody openly admitting blame for *anything*. In this way nobody is individually accountable — and they can all continue as before. You couldn't make it up if you tried.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

LUVVIES

"I would like to be Jupiter, and lie down in the firmament and make love to everybody."

ROBERTO BENIGNI
on winning the Oscar for best actor

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "The rules of your organisation are clear and simple: you're not supposed to bury people under sidewalks, and you're not supposed to resell occupied graves," declared state consumer affairs director Mark Herr to the Consumer Affairs Cemetery Board in Trenton, New Jersey. "When bereaved families pay good money to have their loved ones buried in a

private grave, they don't expect to find out that the deceased relative is being walked over by pedestrians every few seconds, or that they've been crammed into the earth on top of eight other bodies."

Earlier, Lawrence Nikola and Louis Cicalese, of the Rosemount Memorial Park Cemetery in Newark, New Jersey, had pleaded guilty to fourteen specimen charges of burying corpses beneath pathways and in reclaimed graves, and also of having moved tombstones to false locations. "We do not admit that we have ever buried people more than five deep in a single grave," they said. "But we agree not to do it any more."

The men were fined $75,600. *(Australian Cemetery Association News, Winter 1996. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*

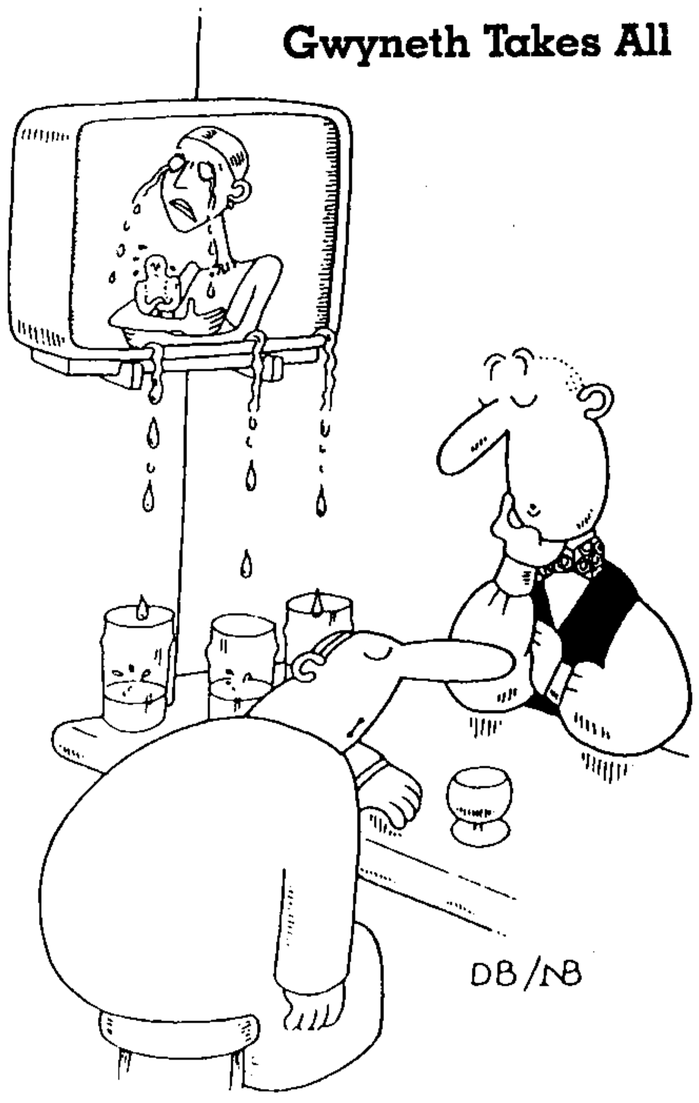
● "If you want war, I'll give you war," shouted Darryl Andrew Hannel as he knocked General John Baker to the ground during the General's farewell parade in Canberra. "You put chemicals in my food, and you shrunk my cock and balls. Thanks to you, I'm hung like a flea now, and I always look like I've just gotten out of a cold swimming pool." he added, while head-butting Air Marshal Doug Riding and breaking his wrist, before finally being overpowered by a military band leader.

Later, in the Australian Capital Territory Supreme Court, Hannel pleaded guilty to charges of assault and causing actual bodily harm. Summing up, Justice Ken Crispin told the court: "after listening to medical experts, I now accept that you were suffering from a delusional psychiatric condition, a condition which made you believe that army officers had been secretly placing chemicals in your food for eight years, reducing your sex drive to zero and causing your genitals to atrophy. But they hadn't been, had they?"

Hannel was placed on a four-year good-behaviour bond and ordered to continue his psychiatric treatment. *(The Age [Melbourne], 23/2/99. Spotter: Steve Mackey)*

NEW OLD SAYINGS

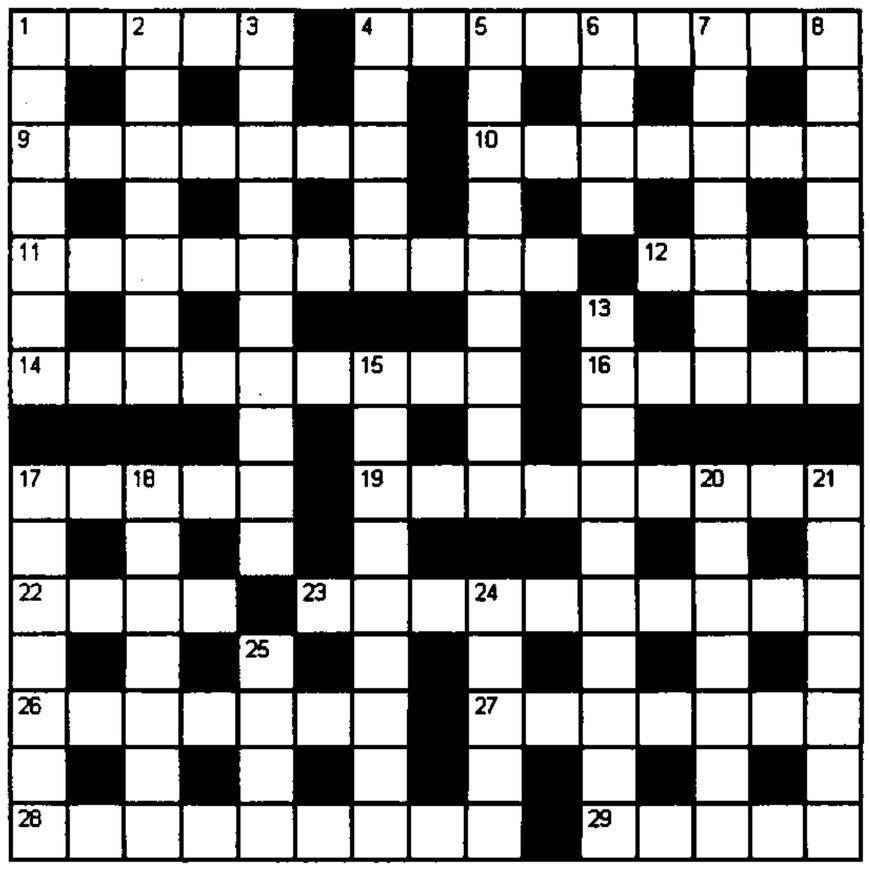
Gwyneth Takes All



Winners weepers, viewers sleepers

EYE CROSSWORD 128

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Band formed by leader of Stones with drug experience (5)
4 Brian broadcast dirty linen and put ideas into a person's head (9)
9 Wacky like a copper back in the station? (7)
10 Point grasped by horrible Arthur, the piss-taker (7)
11/12 A rather pedestrian privilege, getting conservative element of the party to take a hike! (3,5,2,4)
12 (see 11)
14 Dewar primarily exists, cock, to do a corporate hatchet job (9)
16 Bolshie leader embraced by 'Newcastle Nine' (5)
17 The Frenchman's ready to slice butt off dictator (5)
19 Rough vote means Minister gets flipping chop by left (5,4)
22 Bonk topless newly-wed (4)
23 Bill's predecessor gets pale daily (5,5)
26 Alex extremely lacking meeting Brenda's old social worker (7)
27 Butchers seek out gents first (4-3)
28 Agitated and solemn ex-Minister? (9)
29 Blooming randiness gets to Hillary finally (5)

DOWN

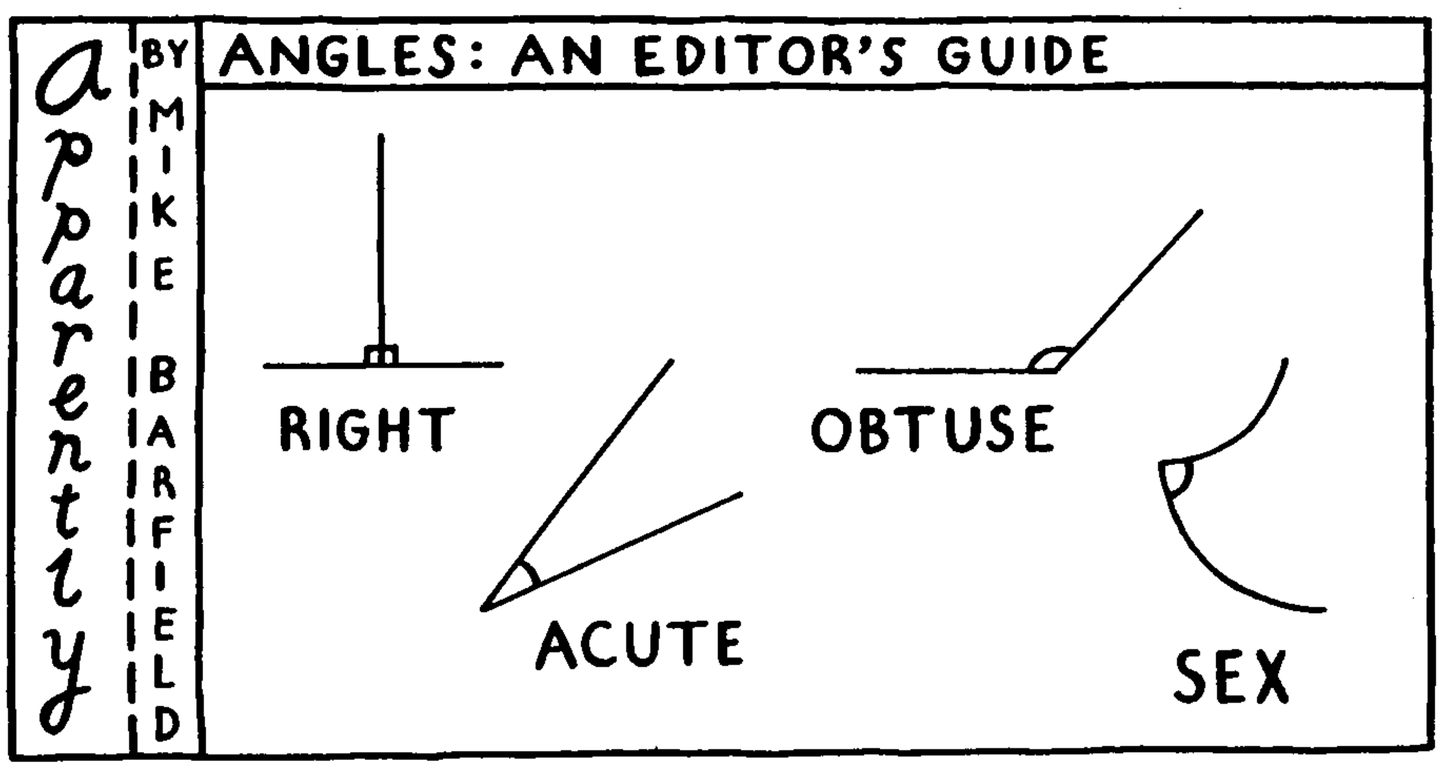
1 Clinton never supposedly expressed contempt (7)
2 Beams when Brenda gets stuck in rough vessels (7)
3 Paula's first official address: Bill still has it (10)
4 Kill Brenda off for being un-queenlike (5)
5 One who carries on being mature before reverse (9)
6 Axed TV host – complete lack of character, we hear (4)
7 Shown ad about retiring leader of small band (7)
8 Chief type Bill was sexually as far as Monica was concerned (4,3)
13 A stand-in model of inflation that nevertheless satisfies some (4-2,4)
15 Bush's poor version of what (in one form) separates us from Asia Minor (9)
17 Piece to arouse member (7)
18 Ban on the outside of Millennium structure turns stomach and so on (7)
20 Acts like Tory MPs and, following old party leaders, strikes attitudes (7)
21 Nearly 100 off – it's a steal! (7)
24 Grasping thing after Peter's heart – loan arranged (5)
25 Meanness restricts a royal (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 9.4.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 127

Winner: GLYNNE HUGHES

ACROSS: 1 Ethel 4 Fit to bust 9 Dumbing down 10/24 The Lords 11 Porsche 12 Partner 13 Bump off 14 Radovan 16 Mugshot 19 Foppish 21 Renewed 23 Know-all 25 UFO 26 Broadcaster 27 Deterrent 28 Yawns.
DOWN: 1 End up 2 Humdrum 3 Loincloth 4 Fig leaf 5 Trooper 6 Owner 7 Ustinov 8 The French 13 Bum around 15 (see 17) 17/15 Gunboat diplomacy 18 Tadpole 19 Faked it 20 In a stew 22 Weber 24 (see 10).



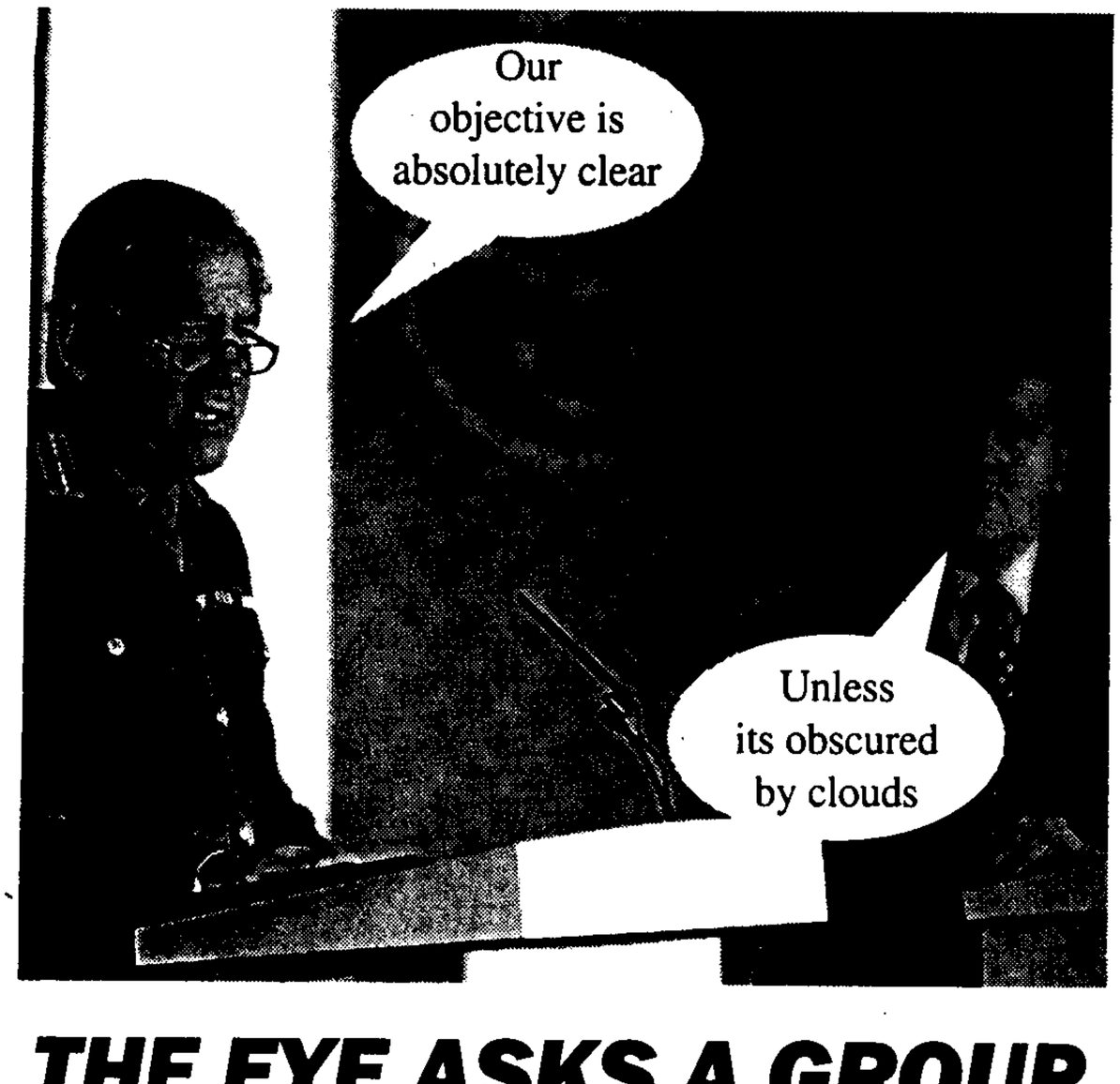
ENGLAND 'CAN WIN IN EUROPE'

by Our Political Football Staff **Tara-Rara Bombsaway**

ENGLAND took a step nearer victory in Europe after their two sensational bombs against Serbia in the first round of World War III on Saturday.

Said a delighted manager, Tony Blair, "The boys have done us proud. They gave 100% if not more. No one can stop us now."

He concluded, "We've got the team, we've got the tactics — all that we need is for the opposition to give up."



IT'S ANOTHER GREAT OSCAR YEAR!

by Our Hollywood Staff
Baz Bigboy

IT WAS another big year for the Academy Awards, as the little gold statuette managed to sweep the headlines, with every editor in the world giving the Oscars the nod over many other stories — a spokesman from the print media saying: "Oscar is the best lead a newspaperman could possibly wish for. It's got everything — laughter, tears, drama, posh frocks — nobody could *seriously* hope to compete with last night's 5-hour epic."

Those who didn't make it onto the front page included Kosovo — which once again managed to pick up *Best Supporting News Item*, and *Best Worthy Story In A Foreign Land*. There was also a special mention for all the other blockbusting issues, such as Northern Ireland, Africa, the Middle-East and many others too boring and not glitzy enough to mention here.

Your Guide To The Best TV Mysteries

Rumpole Of The Bailey

To his surprise, Horace Rumpole (played by John Mortimer) is invited to Sandringham for a cultural weekend as a guest of the Prince of Wales, with Joanna Lumley, Edward Fox and fellow barrister Lord Falconer QC. Rumpole is called upon to defend himself from charges of sucking up to the Royal Family and hob-nobbing with a load of luvvies. For once in his life, the "old darling" is lost for words.

Eye rating: Very amusing

Falconer QC

Top barrister Charles Falconer (played by John Thaw) takes on an impossible brief — to defend the Dome from charges of being a complete waste of money.

Eye rating: Very amusing

Frost On Sunday

Frost is discovered dead on his early morning TV show. Nobody has noticed for the last ten years and the body is beyond recognition.

Eye rating: Very amusing

(That's enough TV. Ed.)

THE EYE ASKS A GROUP OF NATIONAL FIGURES WHERE THEY STAND ON THE WAR IN KOSOVO

Julie Burchill

I am really angry and really fat. Who gives a tossover Kosover?! How dare they ask me what I think. I ***don't*** think. Serbs them right, anyway.

Mystic Meg

I can see the future clearly. But I can't tell you what will happen until it does.

Cilla Black

They got a lorra lorra bombs and they are going to drop them on a lorra lorra fellas! Surprise, surprise!

Billie

I mean, like, really, I mean, it's like, you know, amazing.

Archbishop Carey

You know, war is a terrible thing in a very real sense, yet in another sense all our thoughts turn to the ethnic minority Albanians. And now, Hymn No. 94.

Professor Stephen Hawking

You must buy these wonderful new spectacles, they're awfully good!

ON OTHER PAGES

Phil Space asks "Will this massive amount of coverage win the circulation war?"

PLUS: Maps, graphics, opinion, comment, but no news.

PASSPORT FOR PETS

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

A rather grim hullo this week, as our thoughts are all on the tragic events in Kosovo!

For those of you who don't know where that is, Mr Cook, our geography expert, has made a little map *(see below)*.

As you can see, this place Kosovo is not very near St Albion's.

But that doesn't mean that it's nothing to do with us. I was standing in the check-out queue at Tesco's only yesterday, when one parishioner came up to me and said, "Vicar, I listened to your sermon last week about Mr Slobovich, I think it was. But I thought we were meant to turn the other cheek in these situations?"

"You're quite right," I said, "we should do that. But then we should turn round and give whoever it is a really good thump. 'For that is the only language that such people understand,' as it says in the Old Testament *(First Book of Cabbies, 18.40 plus tip)*. That's the way we have to deal with bullies."

But our Tesco friend refused to see my point. "I'm sorry, Vicar, I disagree," he said.

I had to remind him that I was the Vicar, and that I knew best! I tried negotiating with him for some minutes. But when he refused to accept my final warning, I had no alternative but to push him into a large stack of baked bean cans, which collapsed all over his head! (I'm sorry about the elderly lady who tripped over one of the cans and broke her hip, but as it says in the Book of Proverbs, 'You can't make an omelette without breaking legs'!)

I am sure this is a lesson our Tesco friend won't forget in a hurry! And the same goes for our Serbian friend Mr Milosevich.

That's why this Sunday we will end our service with a rousing chorus of "Onward Christian Bombers" (No. 94, *Hymns Modern & Modern*).

And now to events nearer home! I have decided to abolish child poverty, which must be good news for everyone! (Our Tesco friend, please note — at least one of us is trying to do something constructive!)

And, of course, you can't abolish child poverty without abolishing poverty!

So, that's it! All poverty will be gone!

It looks as if Our Lord was being a little short-sighted when he said, "The poor will be always with you"!

But then it is only fair to remember that He was living in the past, a long time ago, and could not be expected to look forward to the St Albion's of today.

A Happy Easter to you all (and that even includes my Tesco friend!).

Tony

To Remember In Your Prayers

■ Joe Ashton, who is well-known in the parish, especially for the charitable work he does among the deprived girls at the Thai-Me-Up refuge. We pray that malicious tongues will soon be silent, when it comes to passing on irresponsible rumours about what Mr Ashton was up to.

What Mr Ashton wants to do in the privacy of a massage parlour is entirely his own affair and that of the police. Enough said?

Verses From A Local Poet

Spring In Cumbria

I wandered lonely as a cloud
And breathed in deep the fresh
spring air
And all at once I began to smile
As my thoughts turned to our vicar,
the Reverend A.R.P. Blair!

Melvyn (Lord) Bragg,
Ullswater Road.

Who says the Arts are in trouble in this parish? Great stuff, Melvyn! T.B.

Passing Thoughts...

A sad farewell to my old friend Mr Ernie Wise, whom I never met but whose programmes Cherie and I used to watch with enormous pleasure. "Bring me sunshine." How true that is! And who has ever expressed the spirit of Christmas better than Little Eric! T.B.

TEXT OF THE WEEK

(chosen by Mr George Robertson)

"Blessed are the warmakers for they shall make peace"

(Acts of the Optimists, 17.3)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Vicar,

As your father-in-law, I have a better right than most to criticise your way of doing things — ie, not allowing a free and frank expression of

Yours faithfully,
Tony Booth,
C/o The Old Boozer,
The High Street.

The editor reserves the right to cut letters for reasons of space. A.C.

Not To Remember In Your Prayers

■ Miss Fiona Jones, who has let down herself and St Albion's very badly indeed by her dishonesty over the arrangements for the PCC elections. I find Fiona's behaviour quite unforgiveable, as I am sure you will too. As it says in the story of *The Woman Taken In Adulteration of her Election Expenses*, "Let he who is without a stone, go and get one and then throw it at her."

THOSE NATO KOSOVO OBJECTIVES IN FULL

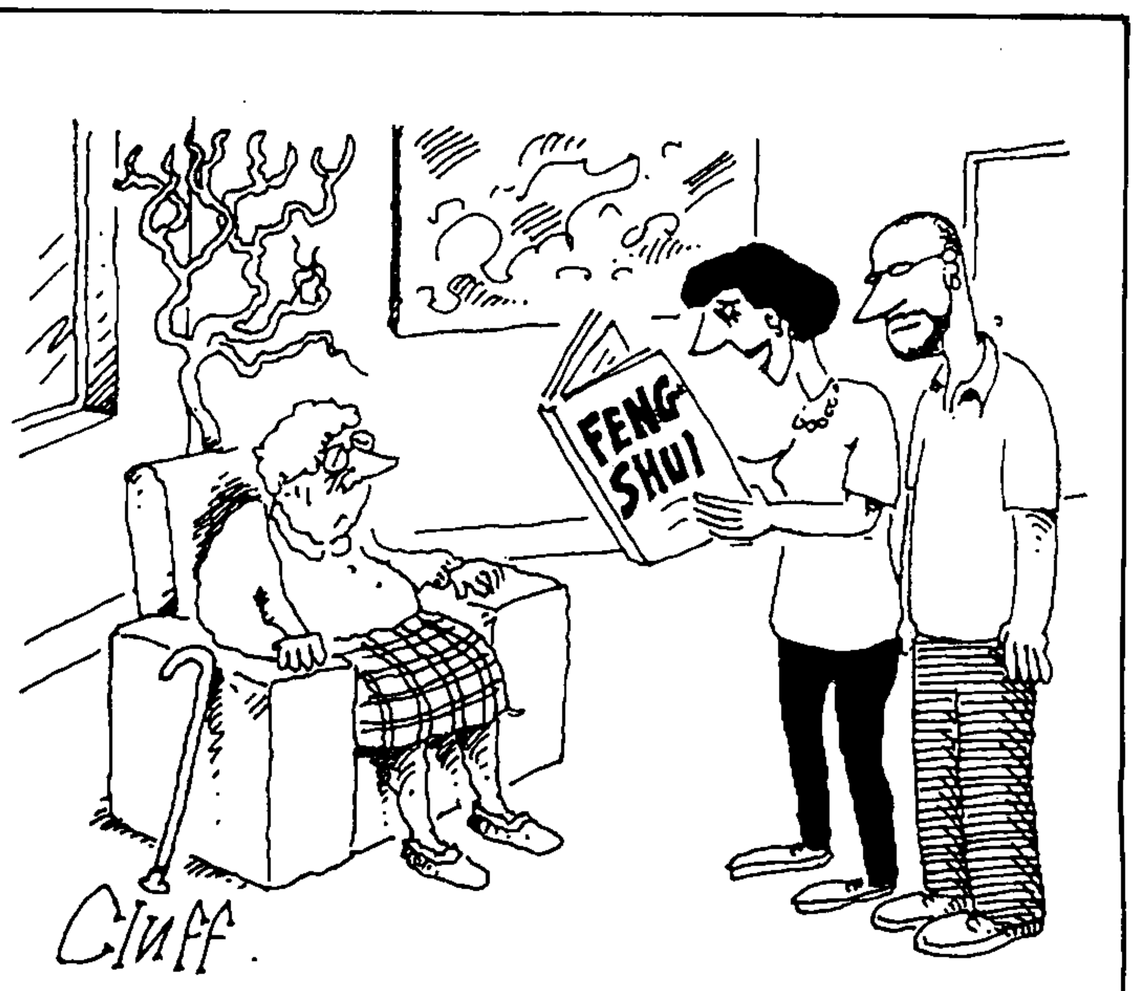
1 To seek out an objective.
2 To carry out that objective successfully.
3 To remember what that objective was.
4 Er...
5 That's it.

MUCH-LOVED CHARACTERS TO BE KILLED OFF

by Our Showbiz Staff **General Sir Michael Rose**

IT WAS revealed yesterday that hundreds of characters from the long-running soap opera *EasternEuropeaners* are soon to be killed off.

Fellow colleagues from the nation's cast of millions said: "This was something which was bound to happen sooner or later — I'm told by some that the place they're going to is a better place. In the scheme of things, it comes to us all in the end — it's inevitable. But anyone out there who's fond of them need not worry — you will in the future be able to see them all on the other side." *(Reuters)*



"According to this, we should move you to an old people's home, Mother"

LABOUR TO INTRODUCE NEW-LOOK 'CRAMMER SCHOOLS'

by Our Education Staff **G.C.S.E. Failure**

MR DAVID Blunkett last night defended his new plan to introduce "crammer schools" to cater for more intelligent pupils in the state sector.

"It is quite wrong," he said, "to suggest that these are just grammar schools with one letter changed. There are in fact two letters changed."

BLUNKETT BAN

"Labour remains totally opposed to grammar schools," he went on. "In our new schools pupils will not be selected. They will be chosen, which is completely different.

"They will not be given special teaching in school, which would be divisive and iniquitous. They will be given extra teaching in schools, which is not the same thing at all.

"Our new crammer schools," he concluded, "are light years away from the discredited concept of the old grammar schools. They are as different as chalk from chalk."

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

ABBA ARE BACK
MAMMA MIA!
PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE
RIDICULOUSLY DRESSED CIRCLE
STALLS
BOXED SET OFFICE
PAY HERE
WATER-LOOS
CENTS
IN OUR DAY ALL YOU HEARD ABOUT WAS BLOW-DRY
NOW IT'S BLOW-JOBS!- REVOLTING
I LOST MY FIRST WIFE. SHE FELL OFF HER STACKED HEELS!
THEY NEVER TOOK DRUGS YOU KNOW
NOW I TAKE DRUGS — BUT ONLY FOR MY BLOOD PRESSURE
IT'S AN INFECTIOUS MUSICAL, ALRIGHT. IVE GOT A NASTY CASE OF FLARES!
BJÖRNS ON SEATS THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT
OH, RIGHT! I REMEMBER NOW, WE WERE MARRIED ONCE BACK IN THE 70's
I DARENT TELL OUR CHILDREN THAT WE WORE CROCODILE SKIN BOOTS!
GIMME! GIMME! GIMME!
IT WAS HONEY! HONEY! THEN IT WAS MONEY! MONEY!
HEATH

What You Will Not Read In The Murdoch Press

THE Sun

Friday, April 2, 1999

DIRTY DIGGER'S DITCHED EX BARS RUPERT'S CHINKY TAKEAWAY FROM JUNIOR'S WEDDING!

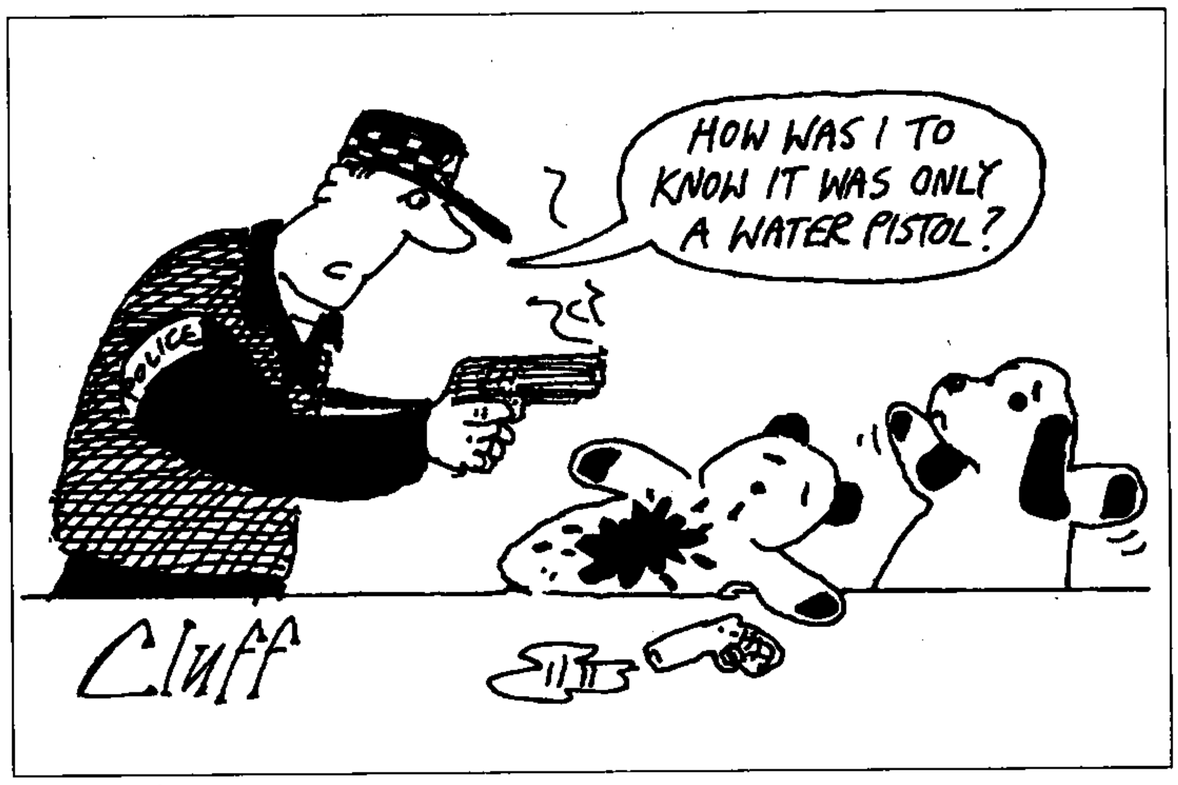
by Sun Staff Kevin Filth

IT WAS wedded blues rather than bliss for Busty Australian Bra Model Nelll Knockers (38, 22, 36) when her mother-in-law, the former Dirty Digger's missus, ruined her big day by refusing to allow Filthy Rupe to bring his sweet 'n' sour porn cracker Dim Sun, 23, to their son Lachlan's glitzy nuptials in Australia's fashionable Cobber's Arse Resort.

The bride was in tears, say friends who weren't there, as a lovelorn Digger stood poker-faced at the altar.

"The whole day was a disaster," said one person who wasn't there either. The Digger himself left early, according to witnesses who have made it up, in order to get back for a steamy love romp with Dim Sun, as a cat fight may have broken out between the heartbroken bride (38, 26, 33), the furious mother (36, 33, 36) and the drunken groom (36 pints of Foster's).

More sensational pictures and untrue stories p. 2



SLAGG TO JOIN HAGUE TEAM

Hague's bit of alright – or left!!

by Our Political Staff
Simon Hefferlump

ONE of Britain's top journalists, Ms Glenda Slagg, has been appointed as William Hague's answer to Alistair Campbell, to revive the Tory leader's fortunes and to win support from the media in an all-out charm offensive.

Ms Slagg has had a distinguished career in Fleet Street as Deputy Night Editor of the Daily Moron, Assistant Features Editor on the Evening Filth, and, for two glorious weeks, Editor of the Sunday Exceptionallybad.

DON'T BE VAGUE, ASK FOR PORTILLO

Ms Slagg will bring to the Hague team a reputation as "charming", "sexy", "modern", "vivacious", "unpleasant", "rude", "talentless" *(shurely shome*

Where Does Glenda Stand On The Key Tory Issues?

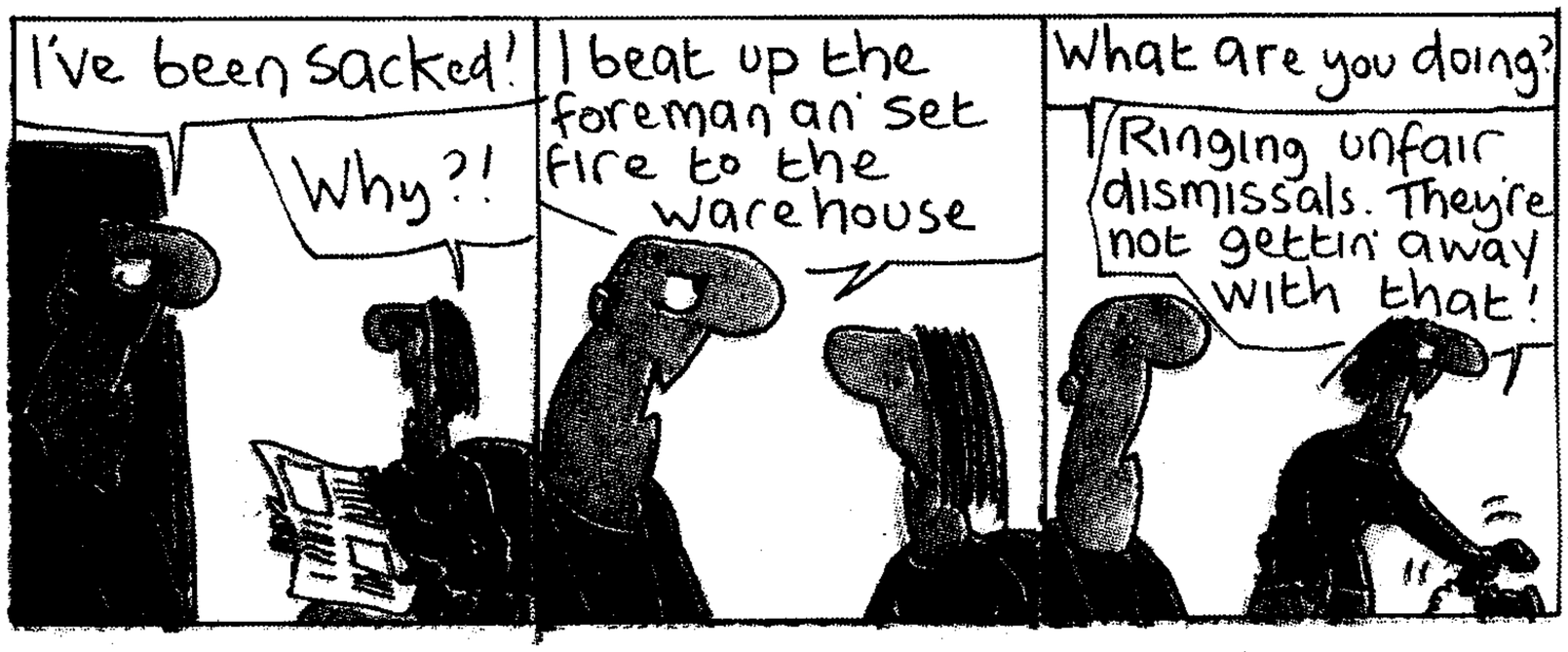
The euro
"Don'tcha love it?" 1998
"Aren'tcha sick of it?" 1999

The Common Agricultural Policy
"What a load of Cap!" 1998
"Hats off — or should it be 'Caps' off — to the plucky farmers of Bruges" 1997

William Hague
"Go Home, Baldy, With Your Pathetic Baseball Cap" 1998
"The Finest Conservative Leader Since John Thatcher" 1999

Yobs

HUSBAND


I've been sacked!
Why?!
I beat up the foreman an' set fire to the warehouse
What are you doing?
Ringing unfair dismissals. They're not gettin away with that!

Sixty years ago, on January 6, 1939, Ernie Wise, who died on Sunday, at the tender age of 13,

Daily Telegraph

Sale of 'Big Breakfast' TV firm to Carlton raises £15 for Bob Geldof and friends

Independent

And on the same date, a man described as having a southern accent, 30 years old and six inches tall called at the home of an elderly couple.

Bangor Spectator

Radio And TV Highlights

THAT WAR AS IT HAPPENED

What You Missed

Day Two

Phil Airtime (Presenter): And the latest news coming out of Belgrade is that things are pretty confused. But for an up-to-the-minute report on what is happening there, we go over to Olga Volga in Belgrade.

(Still photo of hackette in flakette jackette)

Olga *(for it is she)*: That's right, Phil. The situation here in Belgrade really is pretty confused. We're locked in our hotel room, so we can't really find out very much, but I think I did see a flash outside the window an hour ago.

Phil: Was that a pretty big flash, Olga?

Olga: Well, it was hard to tell. It was either a very big flash a long way away, or possibly a rather small flash a good deal nearer.

Sue McGhastly *(for it is she)*: Olga, could you see any Serb bodies flying through the air, women and children, that kind of thing?

Phil: You're on the wrong station, Sue.

Sue: Sorry, back over to Olga. What is the mood amongst the ordinary Serbs?

Olga: Well, it's very hard to tell at this stage, because we're stuck here on the 15th floor of our hotel, and from this height the mood is quite difficult to gauge. Also, there's nothing on the television, which means we have no first-hand knowledge of how people are feeling.

Phil: Have you got John Simpson, the BBC's Supreme Global Affairs Editor, with you?

John Simpson *(for it is he)*: The situation is very serious indeed. In fact, in all my years of reporting on major world crises, I cannot remember any situation quite as perilous as the one which is now confronting us. Only five minutes ago the Serb police ordered me to hand over my mobile phone.

Phil: That sounds terrible, John. Our thoughts are with you. And we'll come back for an update just as soon as we've run out of guests in the studio. And later in the programme we'll be talking to Tony Blair, Robin Cook, Paddy Ashdown, George Robertson, Madeleine Albright, Kofi Annan, Sir Peter de la Billiere and Tony Benn, just as soon as they've finished on Sky News. But first we go over to Bob Waffle at RAF Fairford. Bob, what's happening down there? Is it pretty dramatic?

Bob: That's right, Phil. Things are pretty quiet here. In fact, from where I am, I can see a barbed wire fence, a few trees and an empty airfield. But tonight it'll all look very different. I won't be able to see anything at all because it will be dark.

Phil: So, what's the mood like amongst our boys, Bob?

Bob: Morale is very high, Phil. All the journalists I've spoken to are feeling pretty confident. They've got a job to do, and they're going out there to do it.

Phil: I meant the pilots, Bob.

Bob: I haven't seen any of those, Phil. But tonight it will be very different.

Phil: Thank you, Bob. And to discuss that dramatic report, here in the studio we have Air Vice-Commodore Sir John Prang-Throttle, former Deputy Head of the Defence Intelligence Staff during Operation Desert Song. Sir John, could I come to you first, since you're the only person here? How effective do you think this bombing can be?

Sir John: Well, that very much depends on how effective the bombing is. And that will depend on a number of factors. Firstly, bombing effectiveness. Secondly, the effectiveness of the bombing. And thirdly...

Phil: I'm afraid I'm going to cut you short

Something happening, somewhere

there, Sir John, because we've got a report just coming in from the Yugoslavian Embassy, where we have the Yugoslav Deputy Assistant Attaché Slobodan Rubbergluv. Mr Rubbergluv, how do you react to the bombing? Do you think it's a good idea, or a bad idea?

Rubbergluv: You are all bastards. We Serbs will not be intimidated by international gangsterism. Excuse me, I must now go to shelter.

Phil: Thank you very much. And now, for the background to the conflict, we've got Professor Sir Herbert Sherbert, reader in Serb History at the Institute of Sherbo-Croatian Studies. Professor, I gather that the whole thing really goes back to 1292. Is that right?

Professor: Yes, that's right, Phil. It is impossible to understand why the Americans are bombing Kosovo in 1999, without knowing about the last stand of Prince Gazza the Great against the armed might of the Ottoman Emperor Saladbar the Incomparable at the Battle of Natov. It was this historic defeat which in 1323 led to...

Phil: I'm afraid I'm going to have to cut you off there because we've got a very important update on what is happening in Belgrade. John Simpson, I gather there have been dramatic developments even in the last few minutes?

Simpson: Yes, Phil, I've spoken to the hotel porter, and he tells me that breakfast is going to be a little late because of some sort of bombing that's going on. But I can tell you that the mood is *(cont'd 94 KHz)*

Roy of the Fuggers
IT'S THE CRUCIAL END-OF-SEASON GAME AND FUGHAM F.C. ARE ONE-NIL UP IN EXTRA TIME....
COME ON REF, BLOW THE WHISTLE!
O.K. YOUR PROPRIETOR IS A LIAR AND A BLACKMAILER AND GUILTY OF RACIAL AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT...
MAN-IN-BLACK BASTARD!
YOU'RE GOING TO GET YOUR FUGGIN' PASSPORT
FOUL REF!
YES I SUPPOSE HE IS REALLY.

SHOCK LEGAL RULING

Murderer And Torturer To Be Sent Home

by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rozenbeard**

IN A dramatic ruling last night the government decided that Britain's most controversial prisoner should be sent home immediately.

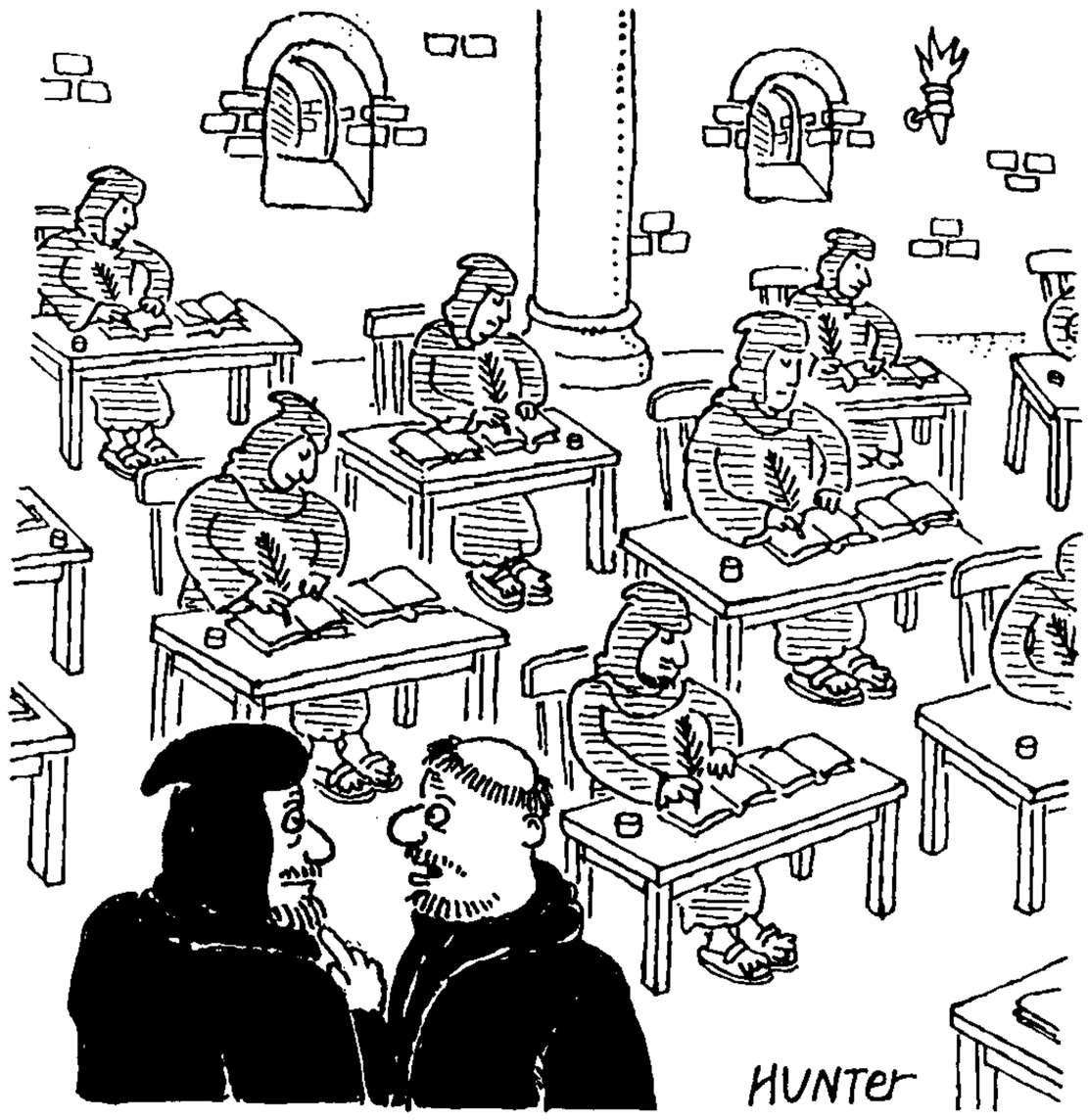
Human rights groups were shocked at the decision, but the Home Office said they had no option but to release the IRA General at once.

"We had to let him go," said a spokesman, "to establish the principle that no one who commits horrific crimes against civilians is immune from prosecution — unless they come from Northern Ireland."

BRIGHTON BOMBSHELL

Said the Irish Statesman's delighted supporters, "All these alleged crimes happened a long time ago, well before 1998 when the convention on letting out tourists was incorporated into British law.

"This is a great day for human rights, particularly the right to blow up other humans."



"My biggest fear is all our copiers going haywire on Millennium Eve"

British United Press Gazette Awards Columnist of the Year 1999

POLLY FILLER

WHEN they asked me to the prize-giving dinner, I had no idea that I was going to win the top award. All I was interested in was whether the invitation was just for me or included a guest.

I rang the stupid PR girl who apologised for any ambiguity and explained feebly that "Admit one only" on the card meant just that, ie as a potential winner, I was meant to come on my own!

However, she eventually relented after I quite reasonably threatened to get her the sack. She ended up rudely bursting into tears.

"It's a good job you're not going to win any awards, dear," I told her, "if you're already crying over the invitations."

SO, there we were, yours truly, wearing a frumpy old frock by Versace, plus the man in my life: my toddler, Charlie. I didn't invite the useless Simon, but he wouldn't have come anyway since he was watching "Truck Racing From Ontario" on Granada's "Men & Motors". The thought of him drinking too much and getting emotional was just too ghastly, not to mention male.

In retrospect, taking Charlie may not have been such a good idea. During a long evening it is difficult to behave well — and most of the journalists didn't. Some of them complained when Charlie screamed during the speeches and there was audible "tutting" when he stood on the table and sang "Twinkle twinkle little star" when the Foreign Correspondent Of The Year described a massacre in Kosovo.

Honestly, some hacks really are dismal. It made me ashamed to be a top journalist.

ANYWAY, to cut a long story short (a tip some other columnists would be well advised to heed), when Angela Rippon read out my name as winner of the Best Women's Lifestyle Column in a Non-Specialist Weekly Periodical there was a groan from the audience — as all my rivals expressed their disappointment at losing the coveted Plastic Quill Paperweight.

I was determined though not to "do a Paltrow" (as I call it) so, choking back the tears, I simply made a short, dignified 20 minute speech dedicating the award to my grandparents, parents and all the Filler family who had contributed to my success. Above all, I thanked the person who had made it possible — Charlie, who was by now charming the table from the Financial Times by taking his trousers down.

I MUST have had rather a lot to drink because I don't remember being removed from the stage by a group of boorish men from the sponsors (J.T. Weaver & Sons of Colchester, "Lithoprinters 'Я' Us") who asked me to sit down and stop shouting "Top of the world Ma!"

However, the applause and cheers that greeted my departure from the stage told me how much I am valued by my peers.

When Charlie and I arrived home (via the trendy Soho House drinkerie!) at 4 o'clock in the morning we found the pathetic Simon had called the police because he didn't know where we were.

Men! Honestly! They're just big babies.

©Polly Filler

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Ernie Wise and Rod Hull

So. Farewell then
Ernie Wise.
You were never the same
Without your partner
Eric Morecambe.

And Emu. How will you
Survive, without
Rod Hull?

That is the
Question.

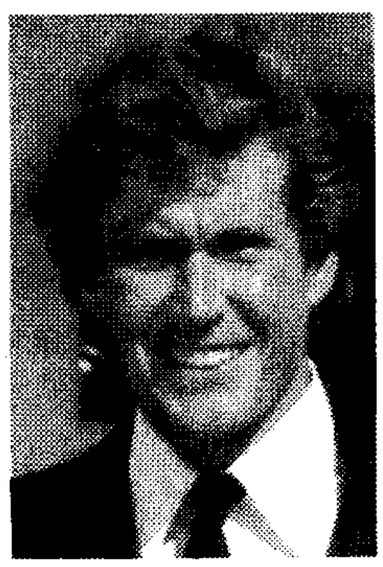
E.J. Thribb (17½)

The above poem has been shortlisted for the Walkers Crisps National Poetry Prize. For more details see www.thribbery@aol.com

Little Em

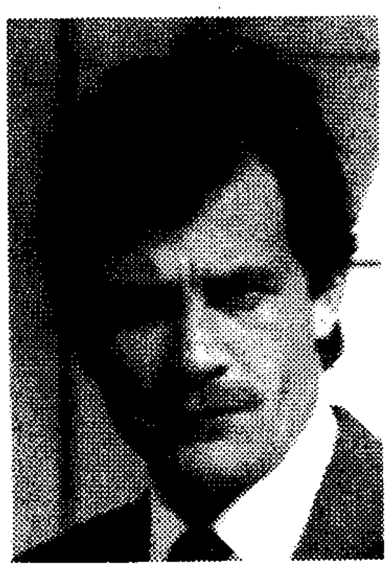
THE GUILTY MEN OF EUROPE

Your Cut-Out-And-Keep-Guide To Those European Commissioners They Had To Sack



Klaus Handintill, 52, former Deputy Leader of the Bavarian Social Christian Party. Has been Commissioner for Organic Olives And Media Studies since 1996. The report described him as "a bit shifty but totally innocent".

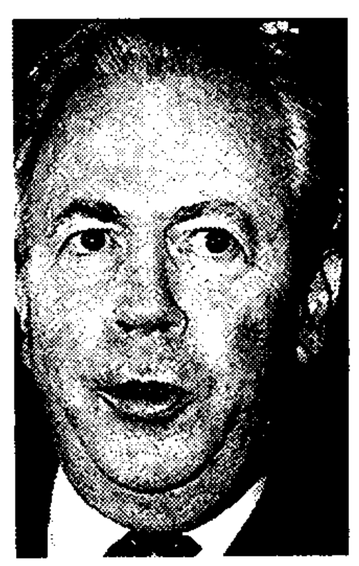
Emma La Payola, 46, former Chief Advisor to the Spanish Government on contraception policy. Has been Commissioner for School Milk, Airports and Bullfighting since 1996. The report acquits her of any wrongdoing, apart from being "a bit dodgy".



Herge Bribe, 48, former Mayor of Bruges. Has been Commissioner for Tax Harmonisation, Sandwiches and Underfloor Heating since 1995. The report could find no fault with his thoroughly suspicious conduct.

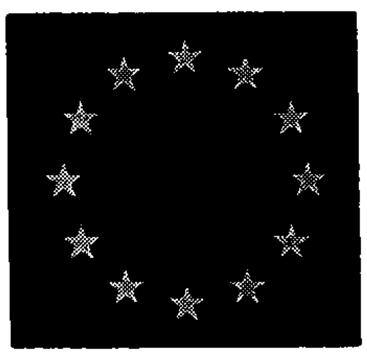
Sir Leon Brittan, 58, formerly failed British politician. Has been Commissioner for External Lunches, Trading Stamps and Non-Spanish Omelettes since 1988. The report found Sir Leon to be "an innocent slimy creep".

Madame Eugenie Croissant, 57, former mistress of the President of France. Commissioner for Fraud, Mismanagement and Sado-Nepotism since 1997. The report found her to be "totally corrupt and a suitable scapegoat for all the other innocent Commissioners."



Santer Klaus, 62, formerly President of Radio Luxemburg. President of the European Commission since 1994, responsible for Doing Nothing And Getting Away With It. The report totally exonerated him, but recommended that he should "resign immediately before they find out what he's been up to".

(That's enough innocent guilty men. Ed.)



WHO ARE THEY — The New Whiter-Than-White EC Commissioners Who Will Take Europe Into The New Sleaze-Free Millennium?

See above with a few exceptions to make it look as though things have changed.

BBC 'DUMBS UP' IN DRAMATIC SWITCH TO QUALITY

by Our Media Staff
Maggie Brownnose

IN A dramatic change of policy the BBC today announced that it would "no longer be trying to compete with ITV for ratings".

Said Mr Botney, the BBC's Head of Statements, "We will return to high quality programming of the type associated with Lord Reith."

DUMB BLAND

Mr Botney then unveiled the BBC's Summer Schedules, to prove that the Corporation's commitment to public service programming was second to none in the entire civilised world.

What You Will See — That Schedule In Full

PERIOD DRAMA

● ***Great Sexpectations***, adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens, starring Charlotte Rampant as Miss Havitoff, the reclusive nymphomaniac who seduces the young Pip, played by Robbie Williams.

NEW DOCU-SOAP

● ***Upholsterers From Hell***, chilling fly-on-the-wall documentary, names and shames the worst upholsterers in the West Midlands. Horrific scenes as chairs are put back together with their springs hanging out.

EDUCATION

● 36-part series on ***The History Of Human Thought, From Plato To Chris Evans***, presented by Anthony Worral-Thompson and Denise van Outen.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

● ***You're Nicked***, out-and-about with the elite Thames Valley traffic squad. A vivid insight into the everyday work of the "breathalyser boys", as they stop motorists on the M25, and ask them to "turn off the ignition, step outside the car and blow into this little tube".

SCIENCE

● ***Inside The Moustache***, a 24-part medical investigation into the phenomenon of facial hair, presented by Professor Robert Winston. For the first time ever, miniature cameras explore the mysterious, beautiful micro-world of the moustache, plus lots of close-ups of naked women to stop you getting bored.

CONTEMPORARY SERIAL

● ***The Ratings Chasers***, gay soap-opera set on board HMS Screamer *(That's enough. Ed.)*

www.bbc.dumb.co.uk

DIARY

ALL-TIME FAVOURITE ABBA SONGS

GWYNETH PALTROW: Agnetha, Benny, Bjorn, Anni-Frid — I want you to — I want you to know — oh, I so want you to know how much — I'm sorry — I want you to know how much I've always loved — truly loved — your wonderful, wonderful music — more than you'll ever — oh — ever know. My favourite is my dear grandpa's favourite and my mom's favourite and my dead cousin Keith's favourite and I feel it would have been the favourite of — of Abraham Lincoln had he — had he been able to be with us today and please God let's not forget Martin Luther King who was a truly great man, truly he was — and so our all-time favourite Abba song is — and it was such a — such a very difficult choice — and I thank my dead great uncle Henry and my dead great aunt Hattie and everyone who's ever lived or died for giving me the — the — courage to make the decision on all our behalfs — but it just has to be *Gimme Gimme Gimme (A Man After Midnight)*. And Nelson Mandela — this one — this one's for — I'm sorry, I'm just overcome — this one's for YOU. And thank you, America, for giving us Abba. You're beautiful.

ROY JENKINS: I suppose, on reflection, it is safe to say that future historians will lay the vast international success of the popular music combination "Abba" firmly at my door. The vair real popularity of toe-tapping tunes such as *Ring Ring, Money Money Money* and *Mama Mia* would surely have been impossible had it not been for my not, I think, wholly unsuccessful period as Home Secretary. Nevertheless — and bearing in mind something L.B.J. said to me during a private meeting in his personal sitting room at The White House — I would stick my neck out and nominate *Voulez-Vous* as my vair favourite Abba tune of all time. Though I never found the time to meet Benny and Bjorn on a personal basis, a close reading of *Voulez-Vous* will suggest to future historians that the two of them had spent some vair considerable time perusing my "Essays and Speeches" (1981) in which, in all modesty, I offer my long-awaited advice to the French peoples on future social and monetary reforms.

JEANETTE WINTERSON: I close my beautiful brown eyes, shut tight as only tightly-shut shutty-tighters can ever be, and my imagination — mangled nation, natty man, animated asian — plays me *Dancing Queen* over and over and over again on a personal stereo steered solely by love and art. No one sings it, wings it, tings it, like me, alone and rejected, howling Abba in the tyrannous wilderness of my room. My lips meet those of Agnetha. Scarlet. Moist. Swedish. We sigh for the world. For the world we sigh.

JEFFREY ARCHER: I was privileged to have been a member of Abba from 1974-1979, and under the pseudonym of Bjeffrey I was the lead singer on their major worldwide hits *Fernando* and *Dancing Queen*, which remain my all-time favourites to this day. Incidentally, it may interest you to know that I was at that time the only member of Abba to also have gained two Olympic gold medals for my country in lacrosse and free-form skating.

GORE VIDAL: As the deprived and disappointingly small-membered citizens of a sub-literate Third World country, few Britons can begin to grasp the true meaning behind the most memorable of all Abba phonographs, *I Do I Do I Do I Do*. It takes no great understanding of Our Masters to realise that this is in fact a subliminal message from the international firearms industry. By echoing the sound of a high velocity machine-gun — *I-Do-I-Do-I-Do-I-Do* — the firearms lobby seeks to influence the people of the United States of America and Ungreat Britain (!) into siding with them against President Bill Clinton, who they wish to besmirch for refusing to murder small children under the name of patriotism. And the name of the Judge in the O.J. Simpson trial? *Ito*. Even the haphazardly-coiffed and semi-numerate Einstein could have put two and two together on that one. Incidentally, though no great admirer of pink silk against Swedish buttock, I would nominate Benny as my all-time favourite Abba member. His smile has the faintest whiff of my hallowed friend President John F. Kennedy, who once attempted to kiss me in the Oval Office — with no little success, might I add.

JOHN PRESCOTT: Let's make no bones about it, *All What It Is the Winner Takes* must be surely the ever greatest Abba track of time all, not to mention *The Game of the Name*, which is even better let's not argue with facts because they're there to be questioned, they were a group great all the same.

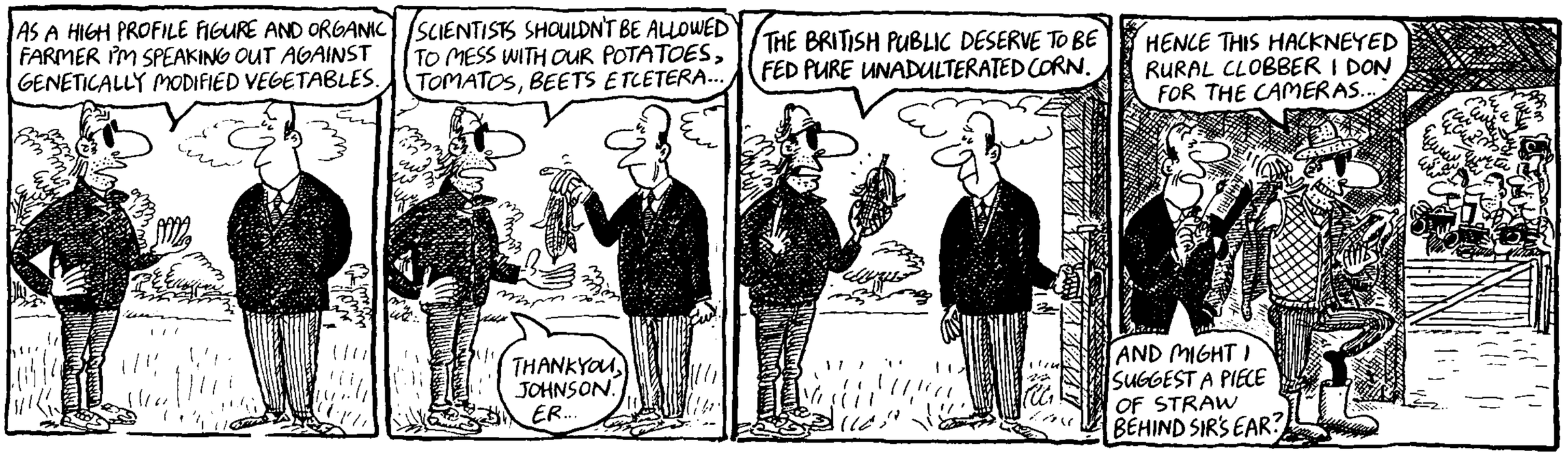
GERMAINE GREER: For Chrissake, what's so great about Benny and Bjorn? Angry? Too bloody right I am. It's high time we acknowledged the truly extraordinary contribution of Agnetha and Anna-Frid. I first heard *Waterloo* in 1974. It's become the anthem of all those women who prefer not to spend six hours a day scrubbing their husbands' toilets. And while the women in Abba were singing their bloody GUTS out, the men were just sitting there like mindless apes, counting out their cash. And surveys have shown that after they'd finished singing, Agnetha and Anna-Frid were forced to do all the bloody clearing up — piling the drums into the vans, polishing the guitars, etcetera — while the men just lay around in their satin bloody jumpsuits picking at their beards. But for Chrissake, what's so great about Agnetha and Anna-Frid? If the Women's Movement still means anything, it means it's high time we acknowledged the tremendous suffering caused to women by those two painted caterwauling so-called. Angry? Too bloody right I am.

MOHAMED AL FAYED: I have the greatest pleasure in submitting to your gracious request for my top three Abba songs of all time. Please find my top three as stated below:

1) *Chiquifuggintita*
2) *Knowing Me Fuggin You*
3) *Mama Fuggin Mia*
4) *Fernanfuggindo*
5) *Super Fuggin Trouper*

Celeb

LIGGER


AS A HIGH PROFILE FIGURE AND ORGANIC FARMER I'M SPEAKING OUT AGAINST GENETICALLY MODIFIED VEGETABLES.
SCIENTISTS SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO MESS WITH OUR POTATOES, TOMATOS, BEETS ETCETERA...
THANKYOU, JOHNSON. ER...
THE BRITISH PUBLIC DESERVE TO BE FED PURE UNADULTERATED CORN.
HENCE THIS HACKNEYED RURAL CLOBBER I DON FOR THE CAMERAS...
AND MIGHT I SUGGEST A PIECE OF STRAW BEHIND SIR'S EAR?

Literary Review

Reheated Chili

Be Cool
Elmore Leonard
(Viking, £16.99)

Blue Light
Walter Mosley
(Serpent's Tail, £9.99)

ROSS KEMP, who has played Grant Mitchell in *EastEnders* for a decade, announced last week that he is leaving the series. This news may at first sight seem to have little connection with literature, but the plight of being trapped in a series — eventually becoming desperate to prove that you can do something, anything, else — is one writers of popular crime fiction would well understand.

Take Elmore Leonard. Regarded as a pulp writer in his early days, when he was also drinking way too much and writing highly-paid rubbish for Hollywood, Leonard reached a position in the early 90s (his own late 60s) when he had done the rare double: sales and cachet.

Nobel Prize winners would be seen with one of his Florida *noirs* in their hand-luggage. Even Marty Amis acclaimed him as the master of a form which he himself paid homage to in *Night Train*. There was even revenge on Hollywood. After years of suffering dismal adaptations of his books, Leonard was taken up by the A team actors and directors. Travolta starred in *Get Shorty* and two of the youngest and trendiest directors in America — Quentin Tarantino and Stephen Soderbergh — reworked Leonard novels in *Jackie Brown* (derived from *Rum Punch*) and *Out of Sight*.

But it's a reliable rule of literature that a writer will often start to take wrong turns at the very moment they are searched out by the headlights of attention. (It's happened, recently, with Don De Lillo and Ian McEwan.)

The signs of career crisis were strongly apparent last time out. Instead of comic dialogue-led contemporary crime fiction, readers got *Cuba Libre*, Leonard's first historical novel, set during the Spanish-American war. To the presumable relief of his publishers, Leonard is back on genre in his new novel, *Be Cool*, an LA caper, but the book continues to show signs of late-career crisis.

Firstly it shows the ruinous influence of the movies. *Be Cool* is a sequel to *Get Shorty*, returning the character Travolta played in the movie, Chili Palmer. It would be a surprise if this were not because Travolta has indicated an interest in playing Chili again.

But in reheating Chili Leonard has made another tired writer's error. *Get Shorty* was set in the movie business. So the writer needs another milieu rich in crooks and grotesques. Hey, what about the music business? Well, the problem is that Leonard is about two decades older than even Keith Richards.

Grandads riffling through the youngsters' CD collections are becoming an unexpected hazard in the modern novel. The disastrous parts of Tom Wolfe's *A Man In Full* are the attempted parody of the music business. Salman's forthcoming *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* is a rock opera of a novel featuring wobbly insights gleaned from his time hiding out in Bono's back garden.

There's a perfect illustration of the generation gap problem in Leonard's *Be Cool*. A discussion is taking place in a record company. There's a lot of rather uneasy learned-up stuff about royalties and the pressing of CDs, when suddenly the characters start talking about *The Maltese Falcon*. Suddenly the writing seems happy because Leonard is back on his subject. Later, Leonard (like Wolfe before him) makes the terrible mistake of trying to write his own rap lyrics.

Overall the book has a problem which isn't Leonard's fault but is the reader's problem. All truly original writers will eventually become prisoners of their distinctiveness. Pinter's dialogue was initially a revelation but, in the later plays, the characters seem to be speaking bad parody Pinter. Leonard's slangy, gangster dialogue was at first the engine of his success but now, unfair as it may be, you tend to shrug and think that these people are just speaking Elmore Leonard dialogue.

Intriguingly a younger American crime writer — Walter Mosley, whose sleuth, Easy Rawlins, is Clinton's favourite fictional dick — is showing the most severe signs ever of series crisis. Just as publishers and Hollywood arrived with their biggest cheque books for more Easy Rawlins stories, Mosley has staged a daring but possibly foolhardy escape. Mosley has put out a seriously weird science fiction novel, *Blue Light*, about atmospheric rays turning 60s San Franciscans crazier. He lost his American publisher over it. They wanted the Easy Rawlins to continue.

Leonard and Mosley have both come to feel the same terror of being second-guessed by their audience and you can see why it happens. Writers like to think that only they know how the story turns out but, with a series, the reader can open the book knowing everything about it except specific plot-twists. As commercially nervous publishers become ever more addicted to reliable formulas, perhaps literary editors should borrow a headline template from the tabloid showbiz pages: Shock As Novelist Decides To Leave Series.

Books & Bookmen

■ GERALD KAUFMAN clearly belongs to the school of Booker prize chairmen who think it fair to reveal preferences in advance of the judges' meeting.

Hence his praise in the *Sunday Telegraph* for Vikram Seth's "extraordinary" *An Equal Music*, which "resonates in the mind long after the final page has been read".

When Seth's last major work, *A Suitable Boy*, was left off the Booker shortlist in 1993, his publisher Anthony "Fatty" Cheetham called the Booker judges "a bunch of wankers". The 1999 intake will surely be more to his liking.

■ MEANWHILE Orion's Cheetham, not content with being the least courteous of all publishers, seems hellbent on being known as the meanest in the trade.

Sponsorship from publishing companies is the main source of revenue for World Book Day on 23 April each year. Last year, alone among major UK publishers, Fatty's mob contributed precisely nothing. A glance at the sponsor list for this year's event shows that Orion, now enlarged by the takeover of Cassell, has once again opted out.

Many wondered if Fatty's tight-fistedness last year was motivated by the presence of Random House's Gail Rebuck in the chair of the World Book Day steering committee. Rebuck, it will be recalled, replaced Cheetham when he was booted out from the leadership of the then Random Century in 1991.

Now that Eddie Bell of HarperCollins has taken over Rebuck's duties on the committee there is no excuse.

■ WITH around 30 printers refusing to touch it, W.H. Smug deciding not to stock it and the manuscript having been seized by Inspector Knacker, publication of Stewart Home's new novel *Cunt* by The Do-Not Press is far from smooth.

Could the provocative choice of title be a desperate publicity ploy by the tiny imprint? While the author, whose previous novels include *Blowjob*, asserts that *Cunt* was chosen "to test the limits of literary acceptability", publisher Jim Driver has claimed in a press release that he "never believed that the word would cause so many problems". Quite.

■ *WHAT should we make of Macmillan's* Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, *which appears on 23 July and is ostensibly a simple cash-in on the old girl's 99th birthday in August?*

However its pedigree as a speculative wake in hardback is revealed by Macmillan's choice of author: Hugh Massingberd, former obituary editor of the Daily Telegraph.

■ THE row over the closure of the Oxford University Press poetry list has a suitably ironic coda. Two months after the OUP finance committee pulled the plug on poetry and made its long-serving editor Jackie Sims redundant, the committee's chairman Sir Keith Thomas is publishing a weighty anthology edited by himself entitled *The Oxford Book of Work*.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS

The Plato Papers by Peter Ackroyd

London A.D. 3700 Plato's vision

I WANDERED through the grey corridors of this bygone world until I met two little spirits whose names were "Chatto" and "Windus". They seemed fearful, timid creatures. "Have you see the giant Ackroyd?" they anxiously enquired. "We gave him a huge sum of money in exchange for a novel, but all he has given us in return is a pile of inconsequential scraps of paper."

A conversation

Plato: How do I know that you are a novelist?

Ackroyd: How do you know that I am not?

Plato: I have been taught that novels consist of plausible stories peopled by believable characters, and yet yours is full of abstruse dialogues and highbrow jokes.

Ackroyd: It is unusual, I admit, but not wholly unprecedented. But I can prove I am a novelist, by the way. Look at this.

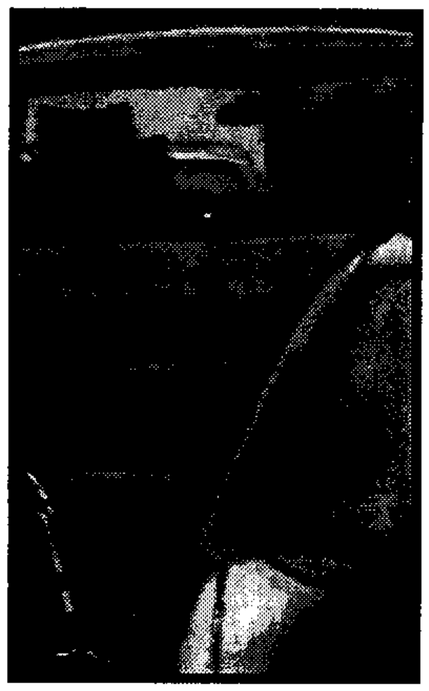
Plato: Is it truly? Can I touch...?

Ackroyd: Alas, it is going straight in the bank.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
I'M SURE THIS WAR WILL PRODUCE A POSITIVE RESULT
DEATH HORROR MISSILES ATTACK BANG! BOOM!
- NEWS -
BOMBS BLITZ SLOBA
SAS BOOK DEAL
- NEWS -

footnotes

NORMAN'S WISDOM

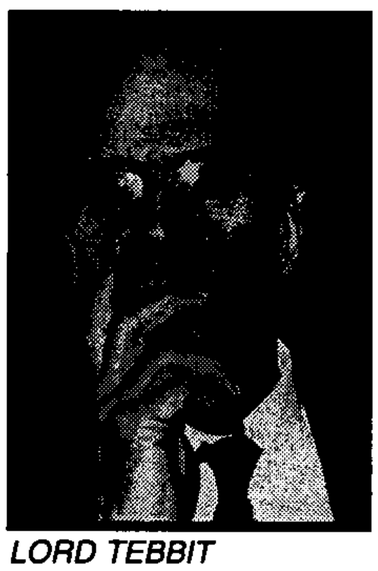


THAT RANGE ROVER

FOR Jonathan Holborow, editor of the *Mail on Sunday* in December 1997, it was an exquisite moment. A few days earlier he had signed a contract agreeing to pay a financial investigator £30,000 for an exclusive story about an expensive gift from Mohamed Fayed to an anonymous former cabinet minister. Now the investigator was going to reveal the identity of the cabinet minister.

"He is," said the investigator blandly, "Norman Tebbit, your star columnist." There was a long silence. "Oh, shit," muttered Holborow, with feeling.

The investigator then told Holborow that in autumn 1985 Fayed had bought a Range Rover for Lady Tebbit. She had been paralysed for life in the 1984 Brighton bombing and the car had been specially adapted for her. The conversion had taken a long time, and the vehicle was handed over to the Tebbits at Easter 1986. The significance of the gift seemed obvious. It came a few months after Tebbit, as secretary of state for trade and industry, had decided not to refer to the monopolies commission the controversial bid by Fayed to buy the House of Fraser, which included Harrods.



LORD TEBBIT

A few weeks later, the investigator was told that the *Mail on Sunday* was not going ahead with his story because it did not stand up. He was paid a "kill fee" of £15,000. And that seemed the end of the matter.

Flash forward to March 1999, and a conversation between Peter Dobbie, *Mail on Sunday* assistant editor, and Lord Tebbit. The subject of the conversation was Mohamed Fayed and his long quest for a British passport. Dobbie, who like most *Mail* journalists knew the background to the Range Rover story, asked Tebbit if he had heard anything derogatory about Fayed. Tebbit then poured out a huge sob story which appeared in the *Mail on Sunday* on 21 March.

It started on the front page under the heading FAYED'S £30,000 GIFT TO TEBBIT, and went on at vast length over two inside pages. This was Lord Tebbit's story as told to Joe Murphy, the *MoS* political correspondent.

In it Tebbit admitted he *had* had an adapted Range Rover from Fayed, but the car had been given to a blind trust to help his wife and at the time he had no idea of the identity of the donor. The blind trust had been set up by Jonathan Aitken and run by Lord Goodman. The car had been bought in Edenbridge, Kent, and modified at enormous cost at Oxted Trimmings. The article reported: "The firm's director and engineer came to London to discuss the designs. Tebbit was too busy to visit the company premises during the conversion, otherwise he might have noticed that it was a stone's throw from Al Fayed's estate, Barrow Green Court."

Indeed, though Tebbit became fascinated in the conversion and even had a hand in designing the hydraulics which lifted his wife's wheelchair into the car, he never made any connection between Oxted Trimmings and the effective lord of the manor at Oxted, Mohamed Fayed.

Some yers later in 1993, the *Mail on Sunday* story went on, "the peer was called by a journalist who had a story that the wheelchair was a gift from Al Fayed. Tebbit was stunned."

The *Eye* can reveal that this journalist was Peter Sawyer, who was working at that time for the monthly magazine *Business Age*. When Sawyer asked Tebbit about the Range Rover, the peer offered to meet him the following Tuesday and refused to say any more until the meeting. On the intervening Sunday, a front page article in the *Sunday Telegraph* headed DON'T SMEAR ME, WARNS TEBBIT carried a statement from Tebbit claiming he was the victim of a smear campaign and that neither he nor his wife had had any clue to the identity of their benefactor.

When Sawyer went to parliament the following Tuesday he waited for an hour but Tebbit never appeared. When, some months later, Sawyer wrote to Tebbit with a list of questions about the Range Rover and Fayed, Tebbit replied: "I am able to tell you that I have never accepted any gift or favour of any kind from either Mr Al Fayed or the Sultan of Brunei, or persons known to act for them."

Lord Tebbit told the *Mail on Sunday* he did not find out that the donor of the Range Rover was Fayed until March last year. His lawyers told him not to make any public comment at the time, but when the matter was raised by the *Mail on Sunday* he decided to speak out.

The publication of Tebbit's story in this form has led to some unpleasantness at the *Mail on Sunday*. The original investigator is demanding his full payment now that his story has at last been published. Tebbit's moralistic column in the *Mail on Sunday* continues. Several newspapers, notably the *Daily Mirror*, have shelled out money for the Range Rover story but backed away from publication. As for the Range Rover, it was originally sold to Mrs Julie Fowell in Derby, from whom it was bought up again by... the *Mail on Sunday*.

Northern Ireland: How justice works

1993

Pte Lee Clegg is up for murdering Karen Reilly by shooting at her passing car. It is alleged that an injury to the left leg of Clegg's colleague Pte Aindow was faked to make it look as if he had been hit by the car, and thus justify the shooting.

Mr Justice Campbell says: "I do not believe that Clegg would have been capable of making up the story about Private Andrew being injured, having heard him give evidence. I consider it possible that he did fire his first three shots in the honest belief that he was doing so in defence of Aindow..." After a glowing account of Clegg's integrity, Mr Justice Campbell found him guilty of murder and sent him down for life.

1998 and 1999

Mr Justice Kerr heard the case again. He described Clegg's evidence as... "a farrago of untruths and impossible claims born out of a desperate bid to distance himself as much as possible from Aindow". On and on went the denunciation. There was only one possible outcome. Clegg was acquitted.

Legal note 1. Messrs Justice Campbell and Kerr are candidates for Northern Ireland Lord Chief Justice.

Legal note 2. Both cases were heard without a jury.

Balfour Beatty TRACK RECORD

ANOTHER stunning record has been set up by "new" Labour's favourite private finance initiative (PFI) building firm, Balfour Beatty. It has achieved the highest ever fine for a railway accident.

At Chelmsford crown court its burgeoning subsidiary Balfour Beatty Rail Maintenance was fined half a million pounds for a horrific derailment at Rivenhall, Essex. Track which was being "rectified" by Balfour Beatty gave way under a 21-carriage freight train. The last eight carriages left the track, smashed into a bridge and showered bricks on to the road below. By a miracle, no one died. Both lines were blocked for five days and the damage cost £1m to repair.

His Honour Judge Watling was shocked. "The importance and gravity of this case cannot be overstated," he said. The £500,000 fine he imposed should be compared to the £250,000 fine on the British Railways Board after the 1988 Clapham Rail disaster, in which 35 people died. The fine comes soon after the Health & Safety Executive report on the 1997 Bexley rail crash. British Rail and two Balfour Beatty subsidiaries are slammed for "failures of management" which meant that rotten wheel timbers were not replaced. As if that wasn't enough, Balfour Beatty came 13th in the Environment Agency's "1999 hall of shame" — firms fined for pollution.

None of this has spoiled the government's love affair with Balfour Beatty. For a detailed list of their executives' trips with Labour ministers see the last *Eye*.

Lockerbie: Pik 'n' Miss

LOOMING over the prospect of the trial of two Libyan suspects for the Lockerbie bombing are two dreadful questions which haunt the intelligence communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

1 Why has Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa, shown such a lasting and dedicated interest in Lockerbie? True, he was for some of the time head of the Organisation of African Unity. True, he feels he owes the Libyans a debt for their long opposition to apartheid. But on their own these *explanations can't* explain the enormous amount of time and travelling Mandela has devoted to talks with the Libyan leader Colonel Gadaffi.

2 Why has Gadaffi conceded, and released the suspects in what seems like a climbdown? True, he was irritated by UN sanctions; but these hardly explain his uncharacteristic bowing the knee to the hated Americans.

Could the answer to both questions have anything to do with the most enduring mystery about Lockerbie: the warnings received *before* the bombing of a likely attack on a US airliner in revenge for the shooting down by the US navy of an Iranian airliner in the Gulf, with the loss of many lives, a few months before Lockerbie?

DO THEY KNOW SOMETHING WE DON'T?: Mandela and Gadaffi

The most persistent of all the "warning" stories comes from South Africa. On 21 December 1988, the day of the bombing, the South African foreign minister Pik Botha was in London with a large entourage. The rumour was that they had planned to go to the US on Pan Am 103, but at the last moment had switched to a later flight. Had they been warned off?

The question was asked in the South African parliament on 12 June 1996. Colin Eglin MP asked "whether the South African intelligence service had any reason to be concerned about or was aware of concerns expressed by the intelligence services of the United States of America or the United Kingdom about a threat of a possible terrorist attack on Pan Am flight 103 on 21 December 1988".

The answer from the minister of justice was curiously equivocal: "As far as I could ascertain, the answer to both those questions is no." Mr Eglin also asked "whether the South African minister for foreign affairs or any of his entourage had any plans to travel on this flight or had reservations for this flight. If so, why were the plans changed?"

The answer was: "Yes. I am however informed by the former minister for foreign affairs that shortly before finalising their booking arrangements for Pan Am flight 103 to New York, they learned of an earlier flight from London to New York, namely Pan Am flight 101. They consequently were booked and travelled on that flight to New York."

Could it be that President Mandela has more information about this last minute switch and that he has passed on the information to Colonel Gadaffi?

BUNG HO!

THERE was dreadful news on 25 March for beleaguered shareholders of British Biotech, the £100m company with no products. "The board has decided to discontinue the development of Zacutex," said a company statement.

Zacutex, which was meant to cure acute pancreatitis, was a flop. There was nothing in the statement about the grim warnings about Zacutex from British Biotech's former clinical director, Dr *Andy* Millar. As long ago as February 1997 Millar warned that the trials of Zacutex weren't looking too good and urged the board to scale down its investment in it. If his warnings had been heeded, the company would have saved at least £35m. Instead it roared on full pelt to disaster.

DR MILLAR

The decline of Zacutex leaves the cupboard at British Biotech very bare. The only really flourishing side of its business is pay-offs to directors who were in charge of the company during its catastrophic decline. The accounts for last year show a strange item of £1.7m "to cover compensation to former directors and incentives to new board members". Among those who left on the gravy train weighed down with compensation were Keith McCullagh, chief executive; John Raisman, chairman; Pam Kirby, commercial director; Peter Lewis, medical director; and a non-executive director called Henry de Ruiters.

This year the bung business has maintained its momentum. Peder Jensen, the chief medical officer who was brought in to keep a watchful eye on the troublesome Andy Millar, has been well rewarded for his hard work for a full 15 months. He goes with a quarter of a million quid in his pocket.

What about Andy Millar, the only executive in the company who noticed the rocks on which it was about to crash? He was sacked, humiliated and publicly abused. His compensation to date compares interestingly with that of his colleagues: £0.

SECURITAS HOLE

SIR NORMAN FOWLER

THOSE who share the patriotic pride of government and media that Britain is entirely clean of the corruption in the European commission should study the following story.

In 1997, over several months the Belgian newspaper *De Morgen* made serious charges about corruption in the security office of the European commission. They revealed that the £5m contract for the commission's security, awarded in 1992, had been won by a company which had been leaked the details of rival bids. The figures were secretly passed to the company's representatives in a Belgian cafe by an official of the commission.

Finding to their horror that their bid was not the highest, the company executives promptly altered their bid after the tenders closed — and thus won the contract. Then they broke the terms of the contract they had won and increased their prices. Then they hired a number of "ghost personnel" who ended up working in areas which had nothing to do with security — as chauffeurs, gardeners and handymen to top commission executives. *De Morgen* also observed how many staff hired by the company were friends or relations of top commission staff.

The suspect company was Group 4 Securitas which, though registered for the usual reasons in the Dutch Antilles, is as British as roast beef. A prominent member of its UK board when the group won the security contract in Brussels was Sir Norman Fowler who had recently left the cabinet to spend more time with his family and wallet.

Shocked by the *De Morgen* allegations, Group 4 called in another company, Farleigh Projects International, to investigate. After a deep and thorough inquiry by two Scotland Yard detectives, Farleigh concluded that the allegations were "unfounded". This conclusion had nothing to do with the fact that Farleigh was, and still is, part-owned by Group 4.

New Labour loves Group 4 just as much as the Tories did. Ministers were greatly relieved that the firm's name had been so comprehensively cleared. Last year, a full year after the allegations in *De Morgen*, ministers and Labour party officials cast around for big business sponsors for the G8 Summit in Birmingham which was hosted by the then commission president, Tony Blair. Half a million pounds was quickly raised from five companies, BP, BT, Canon, Dell, Rover and... Group 4. Group 4's contribution was in kind — they provided security for the conference free of charge.

Three months later, out came the experts' report on corruption. *De Morgen*'s allegations were dramatically upheld. There was "strong circumstantial evidence that manipulation effectively occurred in favour of Group 4 and that such manipulation had taken place before the opening of the bids". There was also proof that "a large number of persons were recruited on the recommendation of various persons in authority, and some of them had close relations with the assistant to the director of the security office".

None of this was mentioned in the long and rather complacent Commons discussion on the EC corruption. The Tories tended to gloat that their Euroscepticism had been vindicated. And nothing was heard from their loquacious spokesman on home affairs, Sir Norman Fowler.

Biwater of Babylon 3

TAM DALYELL MP was fascinated by *Eye* revelations (last two issues) that a resin plant originally exported to Iraq by a subsidiary of British multinational Biwater was slap in the middle of a prime target for British and US bombers.

The plant was in Al Taji, north of Baghdad, and Dalyell put down a Commons question asking "the secretary of state for defence what discussions he has had with the Biwater company over targeting sites in the area of the Al Taji factory in outer Baghdad". George Robertson, defence secretary, replied: "None."

Not all ministers treat Biwater this way. In December, a DTI press release reported a trade mission to Nigeria led by Brian Wilson, trade minister, which included David White, vice chairman of... Biwater.

You can write to Paul Foot at Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE next stage in the Peter Young "man in a dress" trial is expected this month when the prosecution is due to be transferred to the Old Bailey. The actual trial is not likely before next year — or not at all if left to the former Morgan Grenfell fund manager's lawyers.

Once the case has been transferred by the Serious Farce Office a trial judge will be assigned and the fun will really start with the anticipated bid to have Young declared medically incompetent to stand trial on the fraud charges concerning the £400m he cost Deutsche Bank.

The SFO rejected a request from the Young camp not to proceed against Peter/Elizabeth. Which is why there must be a hearing to see if he/she is fit to stand trial.

This move is expected to rely on what might be called the "Psycho" defence of split personality. "Peter" may have done the share deals, but "Elizabeth" is now in charge. Or is it vice versa? This reversal of roles and the warring twin personalities is said to make it impossible for Young to give instructions to his legal team, one of the conditions for any trial.

The scene is likely to be set for a fitness hearing later in the year at which rival medical opinions will be put before a judge and mini-jury. An SFO psychiatrist, who has examined Young, is said not to accept that he is unfit to be tried. The sudden appearance of "Elizabeth", it may be argued, is an hysterical reaction to impending discovery/disaster rather than a genuine and permanent split personality. Especially as hours of tapes of Young making a myriad decisions while running his funds are said to reveal no evidence of "Elizabeth" at work.

Perhaps like another victim of the SFO and severe depression, Ernest "Alzheimer" Saunders, "Peter" may yet astound medical science by making a full return to the world of suits leaving behind "Elizabeth" and her wigs and dresses.

OLD City friends of Keith Brackpool, former director of Albert Fisher, will be amused to learn he is now a man with powerful political friends in high places.

Brackpool, who moved to the United States in the 80s, is a key adviser to California's new governor Gray Davis. He heads a task force charged with finding ways to manage the state's water resources — a hot issue.

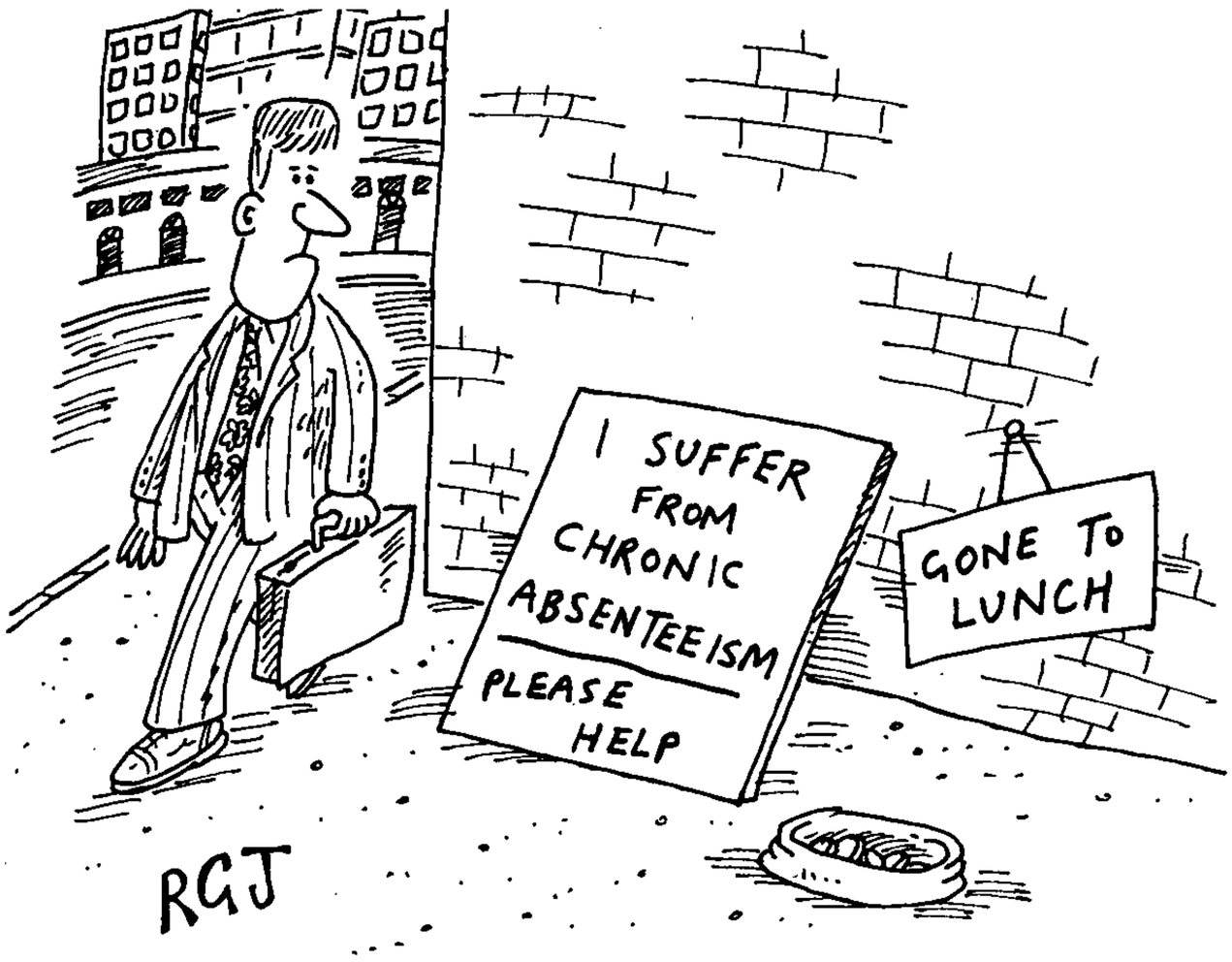
Brackpool made his connections the traditional way — by giving more than $100,000 to Davis' election campaign. He also supported other candidates, donating more than $300,000 in two years. To be precise the donations came from Cadiz, the listed agro-company of which Brackpool is chief executive. Cadiz, which owns water rights over more than 50,000 acres of California's Central Valley and Mojave Desert, expects to gain substantially from privatisation of the storage and transfer of water.

Doubtless Brackpool has made governor Davis aware of his criminal conviction in Britain and his friendship with ace insider dealer Ben Anderson.

Brackpool pleaded guilty in 1983 to dealing in securities without a license and failing to file accounts in relation to the activities of Nishco Portfolio Management of which he was a director and part-owner. This followed an investigation by the City police. Brackpool was fined £2,000.

Stockbroker Anderson traded inside information to make secret profits hidden in Swiss accounts. Anderson was targeted by the Stock Exchange, the Department of Timidity & Inaction and the Inland Revenue. He was forced into a six-figure settlement with the taxman after being convicted of applying for a false passport. Anderson and his "tag system" were criticised in the 1994 DTI report into insider dealing ahead of the 1988 bid battle for Consolidated Gold Fields.

But that is all water under the bridge out in California.



IT SEEMS Paul Levinson and his new best friend and fellow offshore operator Wilhelm Mittrich may have found an unusual backer for their cheap CD venture which encompasses the former assets of the latest Levinson victim, Tring International.

The plan is to switch CD production to two plants in the former East Germany where cash-for-jobs deals are readily available. So much so that the German taxpayer might even be paying to acquire the ex-Tring and Carlton CD assets!

***Vorsprung durch Teknik*... or, knowing Levinson, probably not.**

MORE on American con artist Elouise Marie Corbin, aka Nina Petros, whose fraudulent schemes if not her beauty seduced the Cypriot Orthodox Bishop of Limassol (*Eye* 959) and won her the 1998 Gnome award as Crook of the Year.

It has emerged that before she arrived in Cyprus in 1996 the fiftysomething Corbin had duped a British solicitor into assisting in a previous "get-poor-quick" scheme involving that international fraudster's 90s favourite, "prime bank notes".

Alan Dixon, a solicitor from Cambridge, was struck off by the Law Society in October 1996 for assisting "Emma Corbin" rip off Scandinavian investors who had been promised massive profits from the non-existent market in these fictitious financial instruments. Corbin disappeared with the loot leaving Dixon, like the now ex-Bishop Chrysanthos, to take the fall.

DAVID MOULSDALE, the 29-year-old who runs Optical Express, the opticians' chain which is one of Britain's fastest growing businesses, was voted Scotland's Entrepreneur of the Year for 1998.

His is an undoubted success story expected to come to a stock market near you in the not too distant future. Which makes all the more puzzling the number of small claims made against Optical Express companies in Scottish courts last year for amounts from £1,000 to £50,000.

Doubtless these were all without merit.

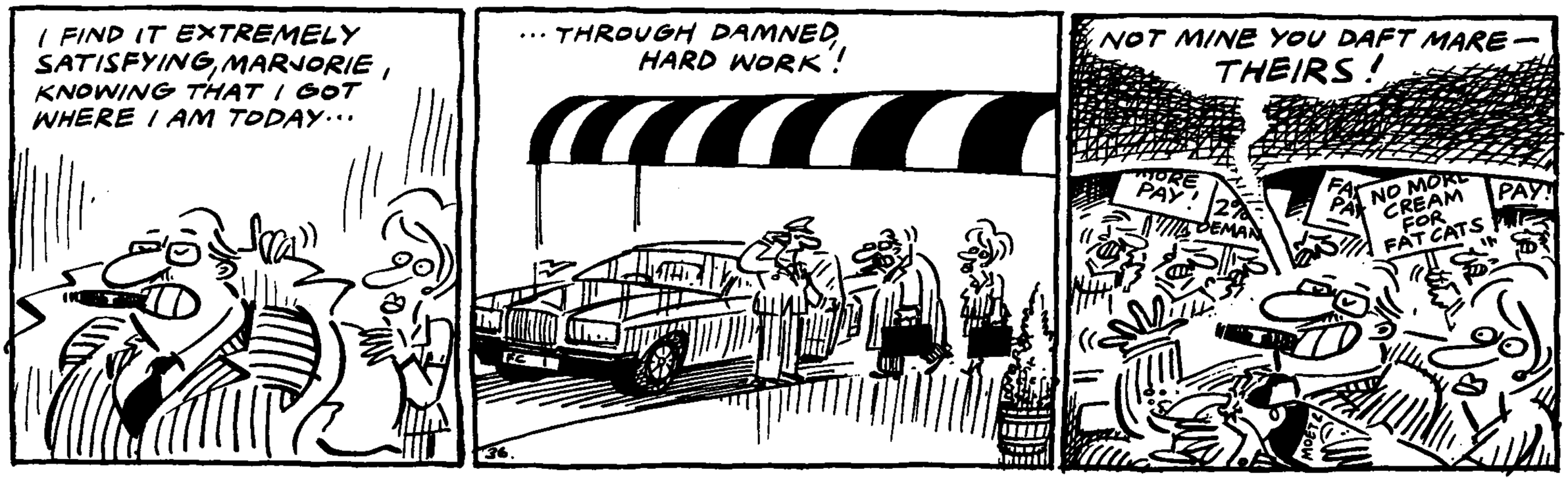
THE Sunday magazines have been running full-page advertisements for the temptingly titled MustWin Club, which offers, for just £9.95, the opportunity to enter an unlimited number of prize draws with a "guarantee" of two prizes in six months or your money back.

The "trick" would appear simply to apply for every draw out there and rely on the law of averages. And the advertisement is littered — as such ads often are — with anonymous endorsements from happy winners whose prizes ranged up to £50,000 and a car. All believable because, as the ad explains, the MustWin Club offers the chance to "unlock the door to over ten years of winning know-how".

Those considering joining should not therefore be discouraged by the fact that the MustWin Club is owned and operated by a company called Golden Standard which was formed a little more recently — in August last year.

'Slicker'

DREDGE/RIGG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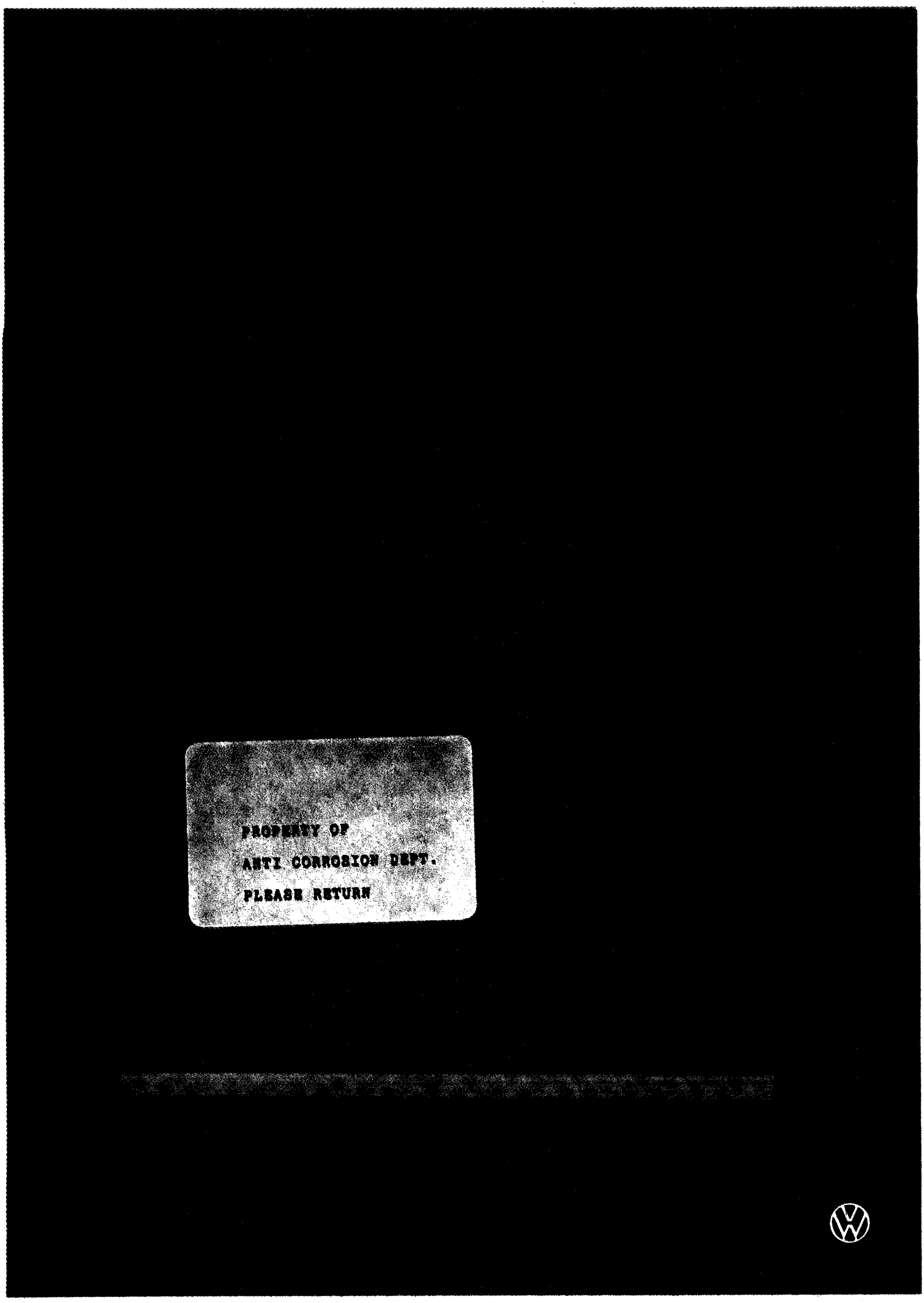
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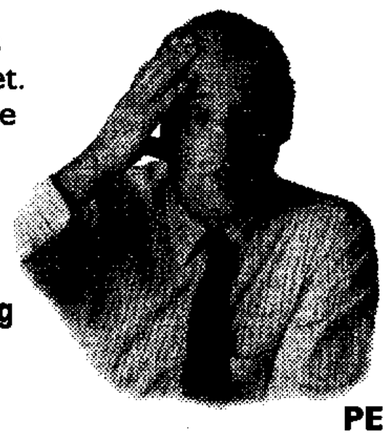

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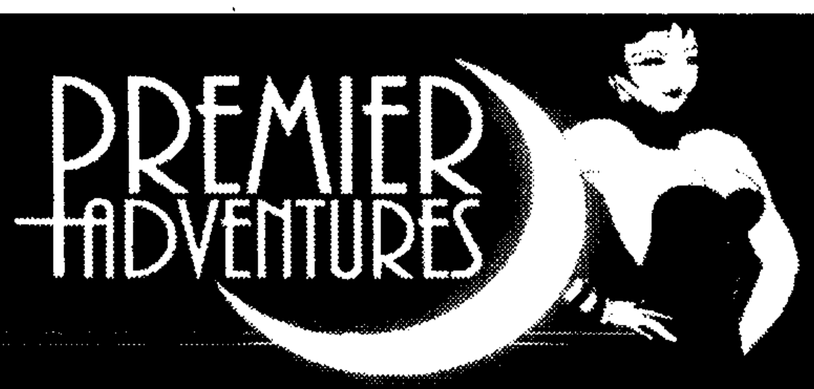

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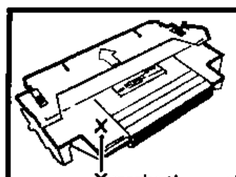

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QUOTE

454 doctors in the Venice region are under investigation for "providing treatment" to 15,000 long-dead patients. They stand accused of continuing to claim an annual allowance... and many also charged for prescriptions or making home visits. Some patients had died more than 15 years ago. Guiseppe Greco, spokesman for the Italian doctor's association, was quick to spring to his members' defence: "A doctor does not necessarily know when his patient is dead."
TOM BUSSMANN, The Guardian

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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 31...

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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 31...

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MALE MODEL, 6FT 38/30 – seeks 2-3 Christian wives. Lewis Yendell, PO Box 2679, Eastbourne, BN22 0LD.

ASSERTIVE, CONFIDENT female sought by devoted attentive male, mid 40s, professional, fit, tall, for ongoing committed partnership and explorations. Box 0573.

B&B WITH AN attractive vivacious landlady sought by attached male (39, tall, good looking). Will compromise with lunch or dinner! (Photo and Phone number appreciated) 30 miles, Winchester. Box 0673.

FIT, FUN, LOVING tactile male, 51, attractive, successful, attached with time and loving to spare for languid lunches and passionate afternoons, seeks similar female for spring delights. London. Box 0973.

NORTH LONDON – practical, earthy writer (50), newly single, WLTM n/s youthful, sexy lady for friendship, travel, fun, maybe more. Photo guarantees reply. Box 1073.

MALE, 35, professional, Thames Valley seeks educated 'thirty something' lady to be long term friend, companion, lover. Box 1173.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE Muslim female medic, 32, (def. no Hejab!). Seeking intelligent, adventurous and happy man for long term future. Box 1273.

ADORABLE, BOSOMY, blonde arts hons grad, wants creative, solvent n/s male, 50 upwards. Box 1373.

ARTICULATE, ATTRACTIVE affectionate female, 68, seeks male company for Bath Festival in May. Box 1473.

ATTRACTIVE, MID 40's male, with successful career – in happy but alas celibate marriage – seeks interesting lady to add spice to life as both discreet friend and lover. Box 1573.

GENTLEMAN, 26 – FIT, handsome bachelor, seeks woman 18-30, any area for friendship, romance. Box 1673.

MALE, ATTRACTIVE (forty something), married, Surrey based, would like to meet lady for discreet uncomplicated fun. Telephone number appreciated. Box 1773.

ATTACHED MALE, 47, non-intellectual but well-bred, seeks female for long-term friendship and romance London / 30 mile radius. Box 1973.

NORMAL, UNATTACHED professional guy, young 53, tall, slim – likes travel, food, wine, music – seeks adventure with intelligent lady, London, South East. Box 0873.

TALL, ATHLETIC, successful, entrepreneur, forties – marriage in terminal decline, seeks lively, attractive companion for lunches, dinners and fun. Discretion assured and required. Central London. Please reply with photo. Box 0773.

OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS– tall, slim cultured man 45, North London based, could put some discreet wind in the sails of unattached, passion seeking woman – any age. Box 1272.

INTELLIGENT, FUNNY, sensitive single male (27), educated media professional, into intellectual pursuits, seeks older woman in London to share emotional baggage. No smokers, Tories or people who read horoscopes. Box 1472.

AMIABLE MALE, fifties, traces of wit and culture, occasionally assertive, WLTM intelligent, pleasant female for discreet, affectionate relationship. London/Essex. Box 2470.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, tall, slim, attractive, intelligent, married, WLTM younger woman to wine and dine. Box 3673.

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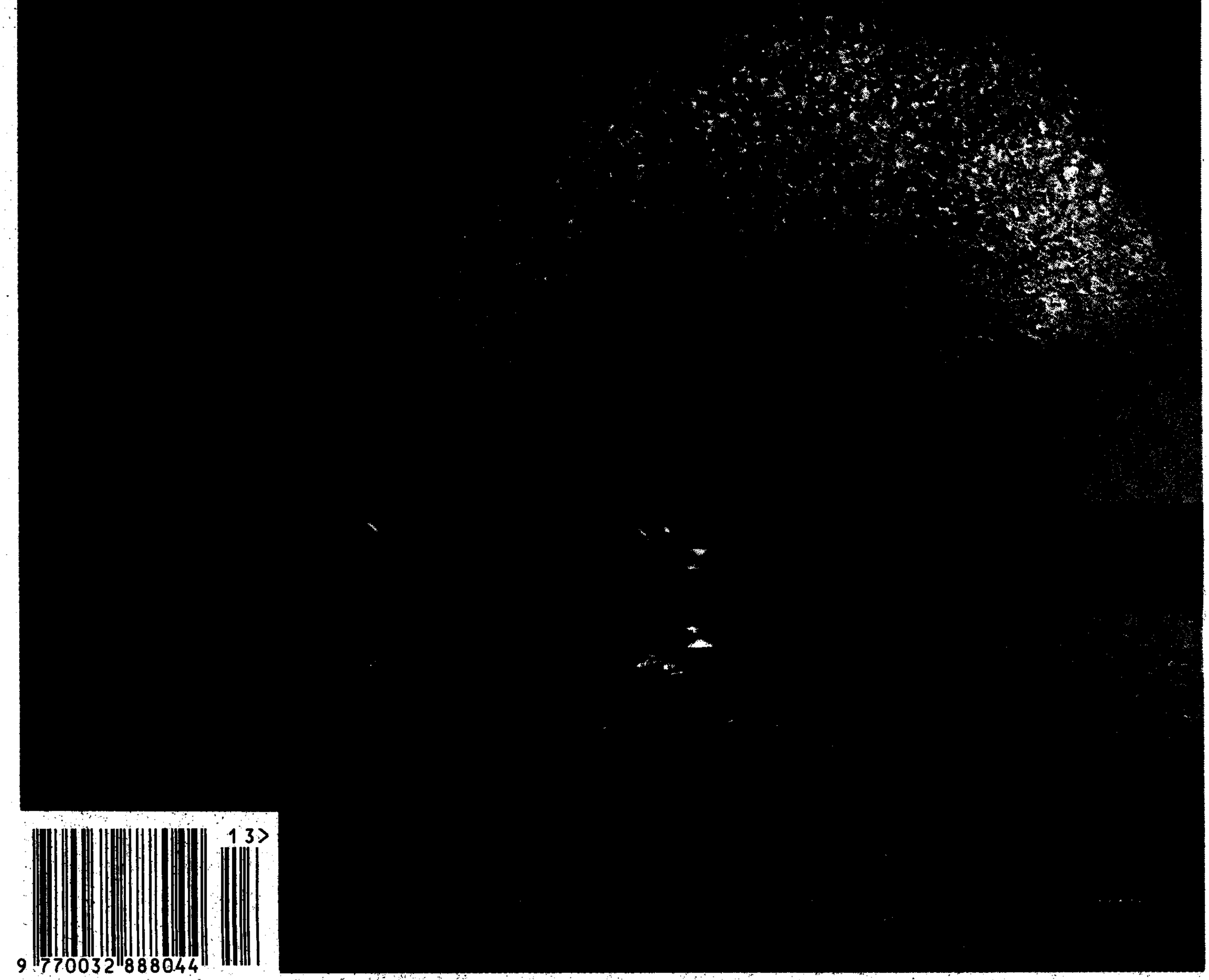

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